TESTS: Honda CB1100R Streetfighter, Pro-Link Honda XR500R, BMW's Expeditionary R80 G/S, Suzuki Big-Thump DR500X

CYCLE GUIDE

ENDURANCE STREETBIKE:

Honda CB1100R

Forbidden Fruit Ripe For The Riding

NOVEMBER 1981
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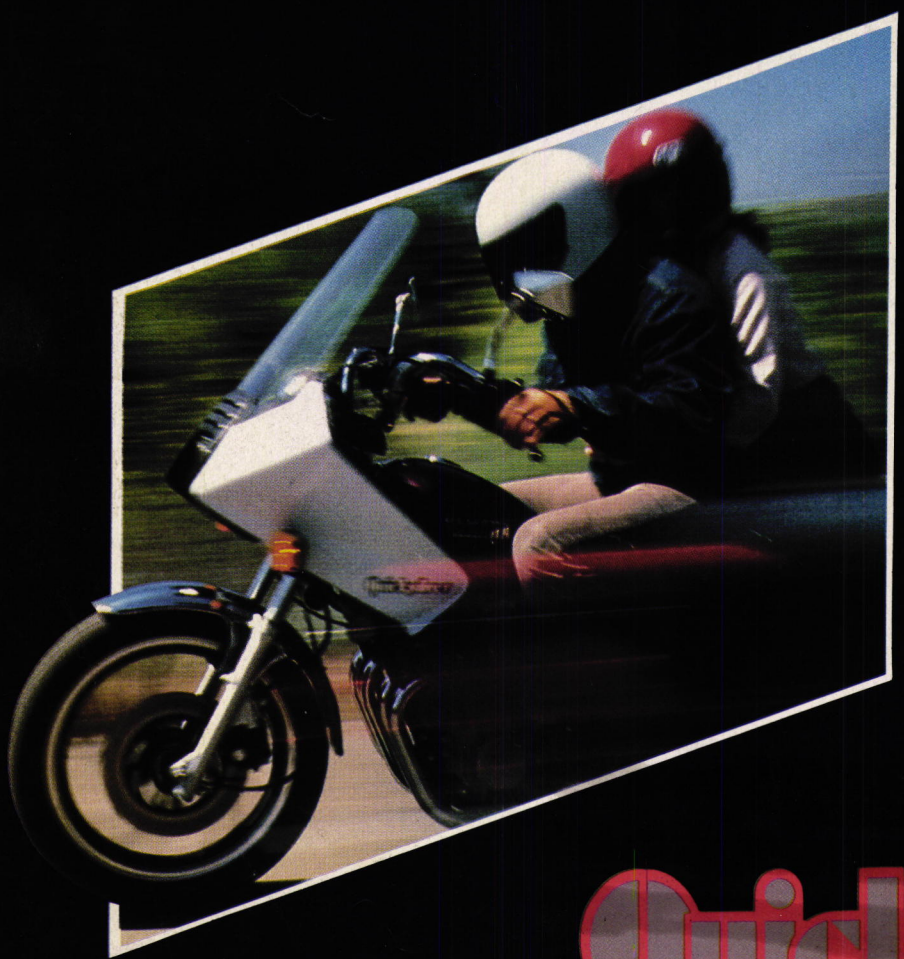
Smart and Choosey



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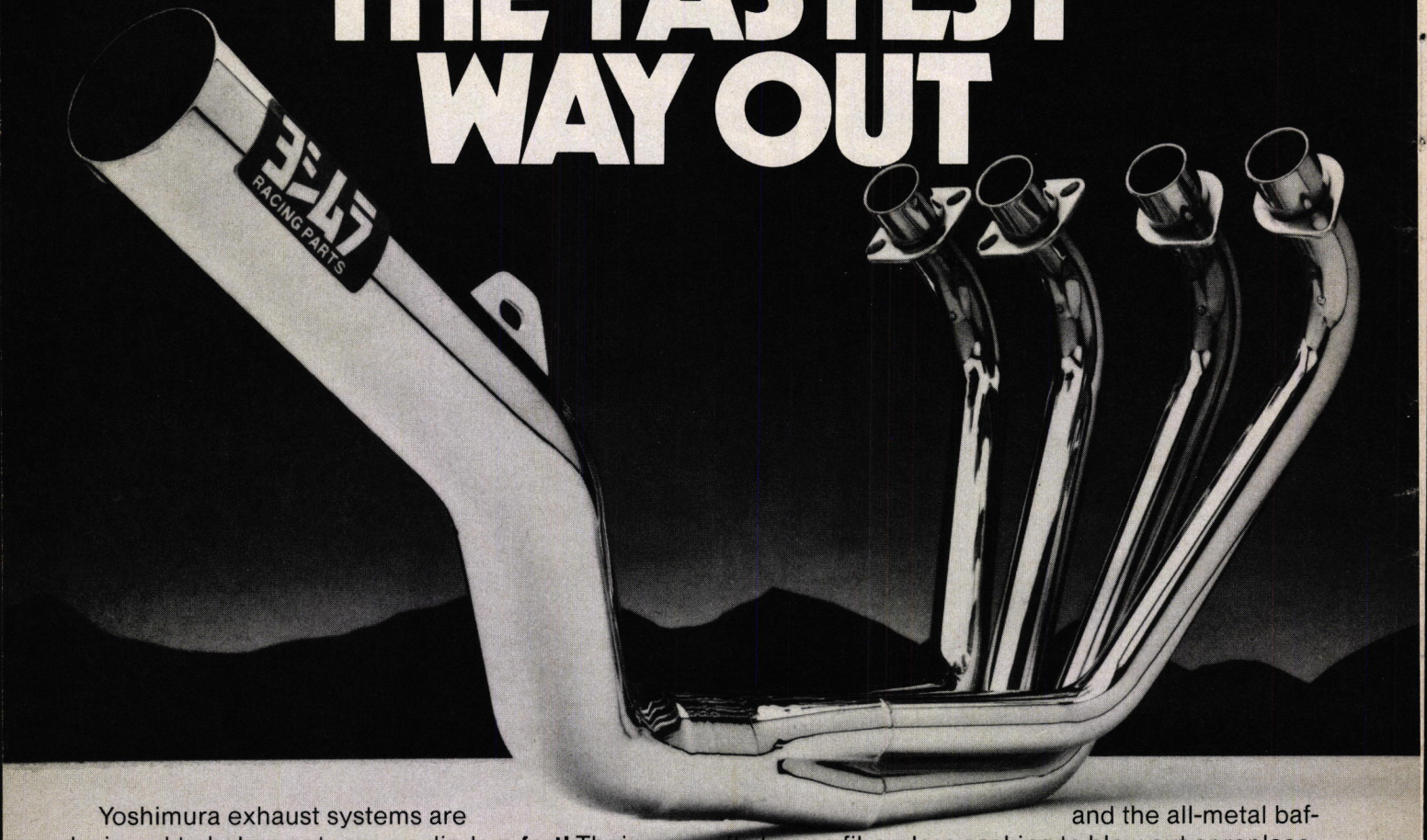
Yoshimura Exhaust Systems

THE FASTEST WAY OUT



Yoshimura exhaust systems are designed to help empty your cylinders **fast!** Their smooth bends, unified flow design and low-pressure, one-piece, all-metal baffles elevate exhaust pipes from dumping tubes to high-performance equipment.

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Yoshimura exhaust systems...when a fast exit is important. From $175.

1980 AMA Superbike Champion Wes Cooley on the Yoshimura Suzuki

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ON THE COVER:
Still life of the Forbidden Fruit Bowl, with Honda's CB1100R as the centerpiece. Chris Eastman's Mamiya RB67 recorded the event.

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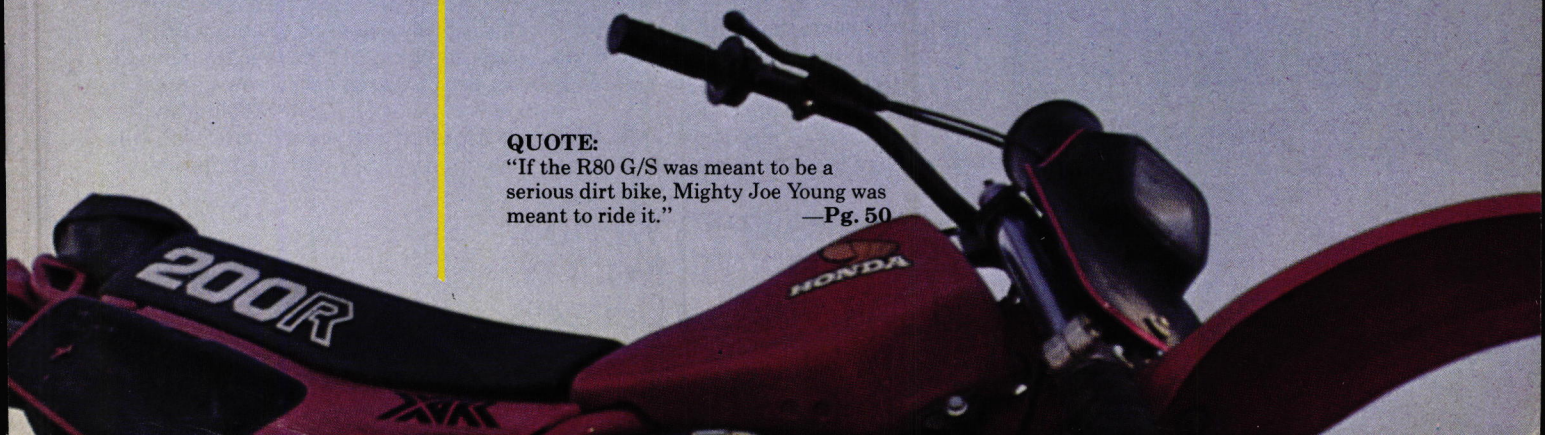
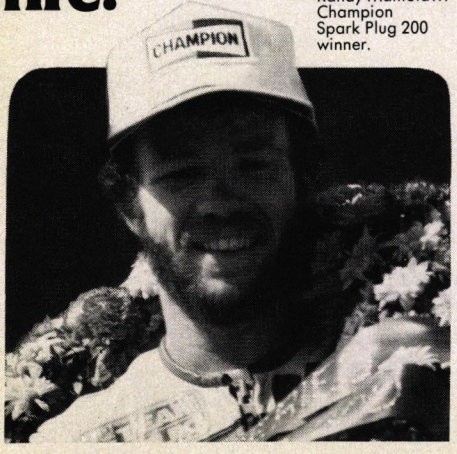
QUOTE:
"If the R80 G/S was meant to be a serious dirt bike, Mighty Joe Young was meant to ride it." —**Pg. 50**



Mamola scorches Laguna Seca. Champion supplies the fire.

Photos by Ron Hussey



Randy Mamola... Champion Spark Plug 200 winner.

It wasn't really a sure thing that Randy Mamola would be racing at Laguna Seca this year. The 1981 Champion Spark Plug 200 had attracted most of the big names — guys like King Kenny Roberts and Fast Freddie Spencer — but some expected Mamola might remain in Europe where his performance in the big-bore Grand Prix league has been nothing but sensational.

Fact is, Randy did show up at the Monterey, California, circuit. With a 500cc Suzuki and a desire to show that his European exploits were more than racer's luck.

With Champion supplying the sure-fire plugs, Mamola came up with effortless wins in both AMA sanctioned 100-km heats. Most race observers agreed the Suzuki's dependability (not to mention a little extra daring in Seca's famed corkscrew corner) was a major factor in Mamola's win.

Moral: If you want to run with the champions, run with Champions.

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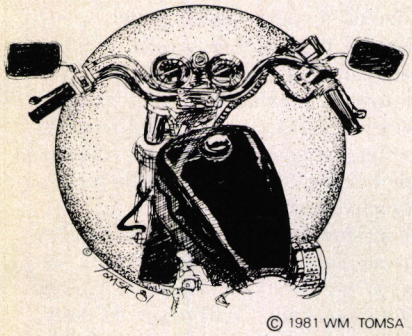

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OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS	HORSEPOWER @ RPM*		GEARS
Can-Am 250 MX-5	Jan. '79	Two-str.	10.8/10.0	218	32.1	8500	5
Can-Am 250 Qualifier III	Feb. '80	Two-str.	9.7/9.8	230	25.2	8000	6
Cam-Am 400 MX-6	June '80	Two-str.	11.5/10.8	233	38.3	6500	5
Honda CR125R	April '81	Two-str.	10.6/11.5	213	NA	NA	6
Honda CR250R	May '80	Two-str.	11.8/11.0	222	27.5	7000	5
Honda CR450R	Feb. '81	Two-str.	11.0/12.5	236	NA	NA	4
Honda XR200R	Sept. '81	Two-str.	9.0/10.2	228	NA	NA	6
Honda XR500	May '79	Four-str.	8.5/8.6	273	25.8	6500	5
Husqvarna 125CR-'80	Nov. '79	Two-str.	11.8/11.8	214	18.8	11000	6
Husqvarna 250WR	July '81	Two-str.	9.5/10.3	248	20.9	7500	6
Husqvarna 420AXC	Oct. '80	Two-str.	11.5/11.9	239	NA	NA	4
Husqvarna 430CR	March '81	Two-str.	11.9/11.3	239	33.3	6500	6
Kawasaki KDX250	July '81	Two-str.	9.9/11.0	248	24.3	7000	6
Kawasaki KDX175	Dec. '80	Two-str.	9.6/9.8	222	15.3	8500	6
Kawasaki KX125 A7	Jan. '81	Two-str.	10.4/11.3	207	20.9	12000	6
Kawasaki KX250	Sept. '80	Two-str.	11.3/11.2	233	26.8	8000	5
Kawasaki KX420	July '80	Two-str.	11.0/11.3	250	34.0	7000	5
Maico 400 MI	April '80	Two-str.	12.3/12.0	233	35.5	7000	5
Maico 450 MI	April '80	Two-str.	12.3/12.0	236	37.0	7000	5
Montesa Cappra 414 VE	Oct. '79	Two-str.	10.9/10.7	236	28.5	6500	4
Suzuki PE400	Nov. '80	Two-str.	11.3/11.3	250	30.9	7000	5
Suzuki RM125X	June '81	Two-str.	10.8/11.7	205	20.7	11500	6
Suzuki RM250X	Oct. '81	Two-str.	10.5/11.3	219	NA	NA	5
Suzuki RM465X	Aug. '81	Two-str.	10.4/10.8	234	36.0	7000	5
Yamaha Pro-Tec 600	Nov. '79	Four-str.	10.5/10.1	262	46.2	6500	5
Yamaha IT250G	Dec. '79	Two-str.	9.8/9.8	244	27.7	8000	6
Yamaha TT250G	Aug. '80	Four-str.	8.8/7.5	242	17.7	8000	5
Yamaha YZ250G	March '80	Two-str.	11.2/11.6	217	29.6	8000	6
Yamaha IT465	May '81	Two-str.	10.0/11.4	247	38.1	6500	5
Yamaha YZ465H	Aug. '81	Two-str.	11.0/12.4	235	39.8	7000	5

*Horsepower shown is taken at the rear wheel and does not account for transmission losses between the engine and rear wheel. These results may differ from manufacturer's claims or from results obtained using a different dynamometer.

STREET

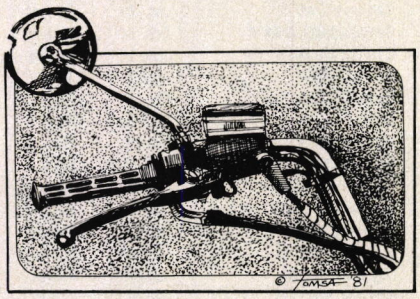
MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R65	March '81	2C/G	14.16/92.1	110	423	45–50	133
BMW R100RS	May '81	2C/G	13.48/98.4	127	492	34–52	145
Ducati Darmah	Sept. '78	90-deg. 2D/F	13.41/97.5	118	487	25–40	120
H-D CLE Sidecar	Sept. '79	45-deg. 2D/F	17.60/69.3	91	1036	25–35	181
H-D Tour Glide	Sept. '80	45-deg. 2D/F	15.58/83.9	108	785	35–44	161
Honda CB400T Hawk	March '80	2A/F	14.37/88.6	100	391	51–65	139
Honda GL500 Interstate	Aug. '81	80-deg. 2E/G	14.88/86.4	96	517	39–53	140
Honda CX500 Turbo	Sept. '81	80-deg. 2E/G	NA	136	549	NA	NA
Honda CB750F	June '81	4A/F	12.40/108.3	118	526	38–53	126
Honda CB750C	Nov. '80	4A/F	12.68/105.3	128	530	39–46	131
Honda CB900F	July '81	4A/F	12.21/111.1	141	547	41–47	130
Honda GL1100 Interstate	Aug. '81	4C/G	13.37/99.7	130	691	39–44	148
Honda CBX	May '81	6A/F	12.01/113.9	136	646	23–40	130
Kawasaki KZ440D	Feb. '81	2A/F	14.59/89.1	107	383	56–64	135
Kawasaki KZ550	Sept. '80	4A/F	13.45/97.1	103	426	37–51	150
Kawasaki GPz550	Sept. '81	4A/F	12.97/101.7	119	449	52–63	149
Kawasaki KZ750	June '81	4A/F	12.43/108.2	128	471	38–60	128
Kawasaki KZ1000J	Feb. '81	4A/F	11.62/116.3	130	521	30–51	135
Kawasaki KZ1100	April '81	4A/F	11.62/117.6	140	559	38–44	NA
Kawasaki GPz1100	July '81	4A/F	11.44/118.6	133	538	38–47	158
Kawasaki KZ1300A GT	Sept. '80	6A/G	12.71/107.4	135	730	31–45	146
R.C. Turbo CB750F	Oct. '80	4A/F	11.99/113.8	NA	523	27–39	135
Suzuki GS450ST	May '80	2A/F	14.09/92.5	100	397	55–57	127
Suzuki GS750EX	June '81	4A/F	12.26/108.6	128	525	44–52	130
Suzuki GS1000E	Aug. '80	4A/F	11.98/113.9	136	528	32–50	137
Suzuki GS1000G	Aug. '80	4A/G	12.34/110.8	139	564	30–51	141
Suzuki GS1100EX	July '81	4A/F	11.36/118.6	141	535	43–48	123
Suzuki GS1100 Twin Turbo	Oct. '81	4A/F	NA	172	548	NA	NA
Triumph Bonneville Special	July '79	2A/F	13.94/96.2	110	411	45–55	175
Yamaha RD350LC	Dec. '80	Two-str. 2/AF	13.23/101.0	113	328	NA	126
Yamaha XJ550RH Seca	May '81	4A/G	12.99/101.7	121	418	44–55	119
Yamaha XJ650 Maxim I	June '80	4A/G	12.60/107.4	120	453	40–54	128
Yamaha XJ650	Nov. '80	4A/G	13.19/102.4	125	476	43–44	NA
Yamaha Seca 750	June '81	4A/F	12.26/108.0	128	495	44–56	134
Yamaha Virago	March '81	75-deg.2D/G	13.28/99.8	105	481	47–51	132
Yamaha XV920	Oct. '81	75-deg.2D/G	13.34/99.4	111	509	39–48	146
Yamaha XS1100LH	Jan. '81	4A/G	11.99/113.5	130	562	41–46	133

*A-Transverse Vertical, B-Vertical, (single-cylinder only), C-Horizontally Opposed, D-Tandem Vee, E-Transverse Vee, /F-Chain Final Drive, /G-Shaft Final Drive, /H-Belt Final Drive

Editorial

Worse Than Stock

Building a case for ragged individualism and wrenching truth.



• There are literally hundreds of paths you can take toward making your motorcycle indisputably *yours*. And if you've been riding for a while, by now you've probably traveled most of them enough times to draw a road map.

You can, of course, lay claim to your bike by paying it off, but payment books and pink slips aren't really the point here. The question is how you go about turning your bike into something not exactly the same as anything else you'll run across. The"why" is simple: Both common sense and research show that you're likely to do it anyway. Oh, there *are* still riders for whom OEM spells unabashed perfection, but they're getting about as rare as tinfoil-collectors these days.

In fact, the latest statistics on and from the motorcycle business indicate that the aftermarket is growing at a rate that promises to make stock motorcycle fanciers a dying breed. But that shouldn't really come as any great surprise. The natural state of a motorcycle is change, and whether the change comes about as the result of the annual evolution encouraged in manufacturers' board rooms to satisfy corporate needs or through the sporadic backyard mutation applied by individuals in search of personal goals, it is still change. The rapid growth of the aftermarket is simply an indicator of the personal changes. It's a reflection of a desire to dip into parts bins and emerge with the makings of different—and possibly better—motorcycles.

But there is an awful truth that lies behind all that wrenching, tweaking and swapping of parts that accompanies most shadetree redirection of machinery. All too often the result is simply change, not improvement.

It wasn't always that way. In fact, it used to be possible to saunter into a motorcycle dealership, any dealership, choose your poison, lay your greenbacks on the counter and exit with a perfectly dreadful bike—at least by modern standards. What you got was a motorcycle that not only invited a little harmless tweaking and customizing, it actually *demanded* serious improvement just to make it bearable. One that required additional technology just to keep it in one piece and running. Sort of a kit bike without all the pieces.

But look around. They just don't make them anymore—at least not in the quantities that used to be produced. Nowadays, the absolute dog of a motorcycle has to be searched out—there's a real reluctance to sell them over the counter—and if you're shopping for something odious in the way of a two-wheeled appurtenance you might have to have it custom-made.

So, like other hallmarks of other bygone eras, the truly awful motorcycle is pretty much history by now. Good riddance. But gone with it is the *excuse*, the reason for and the object of the casual tinker. Gone is the machine that you could do almost anything to and still come out with somebetter—or faster or shiner—than when you started. Modern-day motorcycles aren't readily bettered by the slapdash application of aftermarket ointment to congenital wounds. And to a large extent that's because modern motorcycles are no longer arriving crippled in the first place. So, they have become harder to "fix."

The reasons for that condition are many and varied, but they don't relate to shortcomings in the aftermarket. It isn't that aftermarket technology is substandard, it's just that to make a a small gain in your motorcycle's looks or overall performance requires a quantum leap in both the parts and the thinking that go into the alteration. Modern motorcycles are so competent, the resources of the manufacturers are so great, that to recast a stock bike into something demonstrably better is hard work. It's tough to make an improvement and oh so easy to bollix up a perfectly good bike.

We know because like you, our hands occasionally itch to bolt on a different exhaust pipe. Like you, we're curious to find out how a different seat will feel after a few hundred miles in the saddle. Like you, we want to know what a slightly different handlebar bend will do to the riding position. And we know because in some atavistic throwback to those days of semi-good bikes, we want to believe that any motorcycle can be brought closer to perfection if you just have at it.

But it ain't necessarily so anymore, and we know that, too. The evidence of that truth lies in box after box of used trick grips and shocks in the garage. And in bins of handlebars that looked as if they might solve the problem, didn't, but might on some future project. And in wastebaskets of wadded-up sketches of styling improvements that didn't improve. Just like you, we found out the hard way that some wizard bit of a modification wasn't going to work—or wouldn't work very well, anyway. So what we found was that our Better Than Stock stories would be few and farther between than we'd figured. And that we'd have to sift through mountains of "worse" and "different" to net a single "better."

Maybe, though, there's room for "different" after all. Maybe the path you follow toward making your motorcycle a device unique to you also leads to making it better. It could be that there's some inherent virtue in breathing a little personality into a motorcycle.

Consider: What about the possibility that no single stone-perfect GS1100 exists? What if the one ideal KDX175 has never been built? Will never be built? And consider that the entire quest for the ultimate perfect motorcycle is not only a waste of time but doomed from the start? It's easy enough to swallow; all you have to do is hedge on the "perfection" angle. No such thing. And the only problem with that defense is that it's wrong. There *are* perfect GS1100s out there, hundreds, no thousands, of them. The only thing that makes one more perfect than the next is how the audience responds to the quality and direction of the personal touches that distinguish the bikes from each other—and from stock. You have a vision of perfection; I have another one, even if they're both based on the same bike. And as long as the bike isn't functionally hampered by the exercise, this application of individualism raises motorcycles from mere results of industry to potential objects of art.

So you can consider motorcycles however you want. As far as I'm concerned, though, they're blank canvases waiting for the palette and brush. And if you fall into the majority of riders who change their motorcycles to suit themselves, count yourself as an artist. And not only do you know about art, you know what you like.

—Larry Works

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Riding vs. Running

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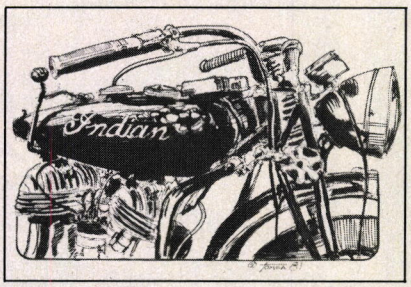
• My instinctive reaction to overwhelming pressure from the Real World has always been to take a ride. I'd feel the depression, anger, fear, irritation, frustration, *angst* or whatever boiling up inside to redline proportions and there'd be a point when I'd just grab a helmet, jacket, keys and flat go. Didn't matter where, really; what mattered was the going. This worked for years, despite resurgent snide comments from my *soi-disant* pals of the non-riding variety, who would consistently roll out the "running never helps" rhetoric when I'd aim for the horizon.

For some reason, they got to me. I stopped taking rides and started believing them, I guess. Their psychobabble didn't impress me as much as the apparent truth of their core argument: Running, indeed, is not the way to solve one's problems. And in this case, I slowly began to imagine that riding was running.

Deprived of my keys, I had to find new ways to deal with the already-mentioned demons common to Life in These United States. By so doing, of course, I ignored Racing Truth Number Four—"If something ain't broke, don't fix it"—and effectively consigned myself to relearning a whole new way of emotional life. It was a messy, time-consuming and, ultimately, fruitless business. I didn't think of it as caving in to the Thought Police, of substituting Their will for mine; I just kept recalling that running never helps, and from that, logically, stemmed a host of behavioral dictates.

But logic is a harsh mistress. Without the balance of reason, she'll strap you into places you never meant to go, and, finally, strapped one day in one of those places, I grabbed the keys and helmet again instead of treading yet another dreary, unworkable path through the thorny Outback of a severe problem. I rode off and didn't think about it. Hours later, long after sunset, cold, wet and hungry, I rode home again, and the problem wasn't. Somewhere on the ride, while I was lost to rushing wind and shifting and apexes and the beauty of the rain-slicked trees, my inner mechanism ground an answer out, without benefit of $75-an-hour specialists, sympathetic family, psychobabbling pals or any combination of booze, dope or pain. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, see?

Since then, I've taken this kind of ride when I had to, and, by and large, it's worked fine. Naturally, some problems



© 1981 WILLIAM TOMSA

are just too big to work out with the inner mechanism and a twistgrip, but I've proved to my satisfaction that for me at least, riding is *not* running.

Demonstrating this was of major importance to me, because all my riding life I've encountered a certain kind of suspicion from nonriding folks. This suspicion is really a composite, and you know it well; it's made of an interlocking set of assumptions unriders make about riders of motorcycles. Assumptions like: To ride is to run. Motorcycles are dangerous, and to actively seek danger is irresponsible. To seek *motion*, in fact, is a kind of juvenile trait, again irresponsible. *Adults* don't need the masturbatory thrill of repeated speed and movement to think, to experience life, to know themselves. And so on.

These are hard arguments to counter, and the people who've made them to me over the years aren't dummies, nor are they narrow-eyed simps who drive beige Valiants and want everyone to ride the subway. Which is why it took me a long time to deal with their overall view that riding is running. What they were saying, in effect, was much the same as the injunction issued by every wise editor to his new reporters: You don't get a story with your mouth working; only if you listen do you hear. Talk, and all you hear is yourself. And . . . ride and all you do is run.

But that's not the case at all. In fact, in riding you seek and find the kind of self-confrontation that very few other activities in modern life afford. Deep-country hikers might find it, or scuba divers. But motorcycling makes this self-facing instantly available to large numbers of people with a lot less investment than two days a week at the shrink. And I now think that this fact accounts for a large part of the continual popularity of bikes.

When you ride, you are immediately placed *in* the environment, and simultaneously cut off from all the normal channels of noise that clutter your life. You can't talk, really, except in brief shouts to your pillion rider, so right away, when the rushing white noise of the wind takes over from the cacophony of other voices, your aural circuits switch to a completely different mode. Further, because of the riding position you're in, even with that passenger in back, you're more alone than almost anywhere else you've been all day. You and the bike occupy your own slice of the world—uniquely in it as no closed-system automobilist can be, but still moving through it, a special cell of thought and action. In such circumstances, your mind can't help working on its problems, the same problems that can't be dealt with while you're interacting with all those other people. Alone on your bike, your mind has only two sets of problems: working the machine and thinking. Reflecting, examining, imagining, the whole gamut of genuine thought.

As much as anything, it's the time to yourself on a bike that makes this possible. Even in your favorite armchair at home, you're not really as alone with yourself as you are on your motorcycle; there's the phone, the stereo, the TV, a thousand little things that break up the workings of your inner mechanism. Consider what a simple, hour-long bike trip entails: Except for its beginning and end, you spend the entire hour in silence—not aural silence, perhaps, what with that semi's tires screaming a foot from your ears—but no one is engaging the heavy artillery of your reasoning centers except you.

We're used to thinking of our bikes as tools for transportation and recreation, but this function is one we don't seem to talk about much. It may seem too antisocial, or perhaps we squirm a bit under the metaphysics of the matter.

To me, though, understanding this aspect of a motorcycle is just part of the pleasure of the whole motorcycle experience. I've gone painfully slowly, from the instinctive use of the bike typical of a young neophyte to a directed attempt to understand every part of it and how it—and I—work together, from shaving seconds off at the racetrack to working things out on the road. And as I do, I grow more and more to think of the motorcycle not as a plaything but as a philosopher's stone capable of turning a leaden day into a golden experience. It's running, all right—but into life, not away from it.

—*Steve Thompson*

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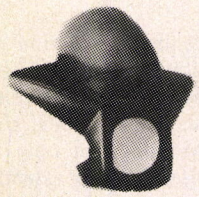

This "QT" fairing is molded from ABS plastic and available in black or white. Comes with smoke shield and universal mounts to fit all popular motorcycles.

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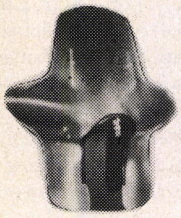

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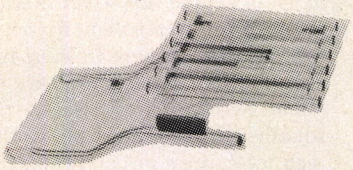

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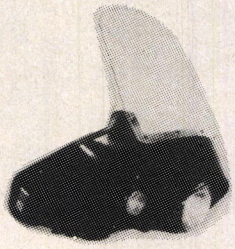

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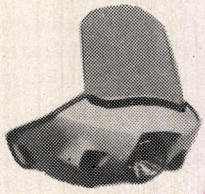

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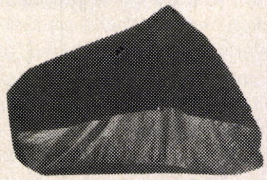

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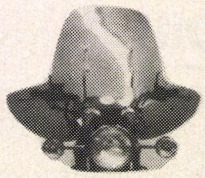

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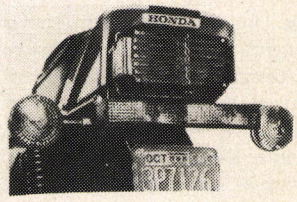

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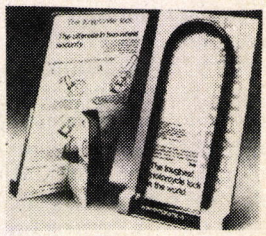

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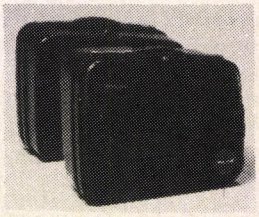

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• When Texas Tea bubbles from the ground it shares nothing more than a few hydrocarbons and the name "oil" with the golden liquid in your engine. Crude oil, as the name implies, is a very poor lubricant that's not much better than water at providing the thin, slippery layer necessary to separate two friction surfaces.

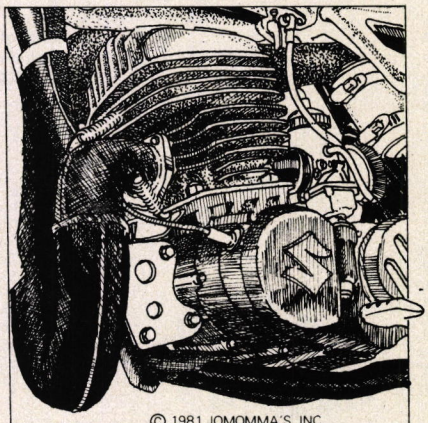
If oil had only to fulfill its simplistic dictionary definition of keeping moving surfaces apart, there would be no problem; but life inside an internal combustion engine is far from simplistic. Friction surfaces grind past each other at incredible speed under extremes of temperature and pressure. Without some chemical assistance, a basic oil wouldn't last in there as long as margarine. Because of this, oil company engineers have spent untold corporate time and funds developing the many oil additives that protect your engine—and even the oil itself—from the rigors of extended use.

The biggest problem oil faces is intense heat. Like a lump of butter in a frying pan, oil slowly thins out as its temperature increases. What starts out like like syrup can soon turn water-thin, with little more than water's lubricating properties. Heat reduces the internal friction between the individual molecules of oil, and the less friction there is, the freer the oil flows.

The Society of Automobile Engineers (S.A.E.) measures the rate of flow of every oil at the extreme temperatures of zero and 210 degrees Fahrenheit. Each oil is then given an S.A.E. viscosity number, which categorizes the oil within standardized parameters of flow. The larger the S.A.E. number, the slower the flow of oil; and without exception—unless something is done chemically to prevent it—the higher the temperature of oil, the faster its rate of flow.

If an oil's viscosity is lowered too dramatically because of heat, what was adequate oil on a cold morning could become too thin during a hard ride in the midday sun. That's why chemical engineers developed viscosity index improvers, which reduce the rate at which heat causes the oil to thin. This process results in multigrade oils that combine the effective S.A.E. viscosity number of a free-flowing oil at zero degrees Fahrenheit with the higher S.A.E. number of a more viscous oil at the 210-degree measuring point.

A typical multigrade is designated 20W-40, which means that when it's measured at zero degrees—"W" standing for the winter temperature test of zero degrees—the oil has the flow characteristics of an S.A.E. 20 oil. But when heated to 210 degrees Fahrenheit, this multigrade has the flow rate of an S.A.E. 40 oil.



This dual-viscosity nature means that on cold mornings your bike's oil pump will easily be able to pump the engine's life blood through the narrow passageways. And when the motor heats up, the oil will only thin to the point where it is giving the protection of a heavier S.A.E. 40 oil.

Even an elaborate Multigrade might not always flow freely enough to force through the tiny passageway on a really cold day. Just as heat thins oil, cold can thicken it enough to make it cease flowing. It then becomes a solid lump. The temperature at which flow ceases is called the Pour Point, and it, too, can be manipulated by chemical engineers. Certain Pour Point Depressants can lower the temperature at which the oil ceases to flow, ensuring that even on the coldest day of winter, oil can be pumped up to the dry bearings.

Whatever the climatic conditions, oil burnt in the combustion chamber leaves sooty carbon deposits that form a clogging black layer over the head and piston. Without any outside help, this carbon build-up could quickly stifle your engine, so the engineers add a detergent agent that softens the carbon enough for it to be blown away. Two-stroke oils in particular have a high level of detergent because oil is burnt in the combustion chamber as a matter of course. On the other hand, it is possible to find four-stroke oils that contain little or no detergent agent.

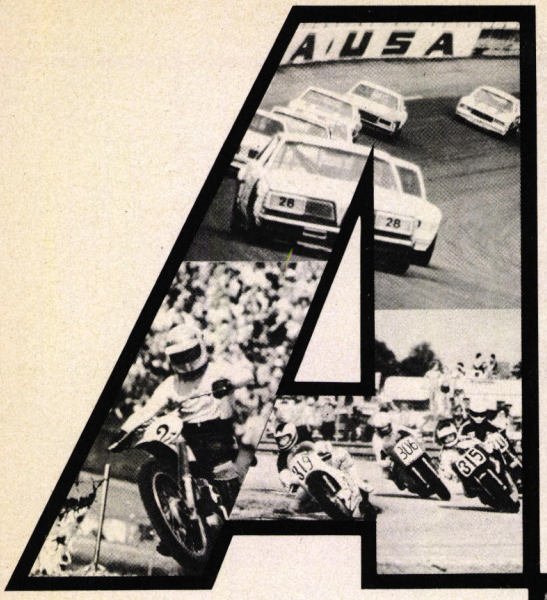
High engine temperatures can also cause the oil to oxidize. At greater than 150 degrees Fahrenheit, oxidation becomes critical; and with temperatures of around 250 degrees being quite common in crankcases, engine oil has a tough time *not* oxidizing. Oxidation not only increases the oil's viscosity over extended periods, it also forms acids and sludge that can be very harmful to the bearing surfaces. Certain phosphorus and sulfur additives help reduce the acid problems, but slow degradation of the oil will invariably result if an engine is continuously run hot.

While all those shafts and bearings are spinning quickly, they are also flinging the oil around to the point of frothing into a giant bubble bath rather than an oil bath. To reduce this aeration problem, a tiny quantity of antifoam additive is included in most engine oils. Gear oils undergo even greater punishment, for not only do they have to overcome frothing caused by spinning gear teeth, they have to withstand extreme pressures as they get squashed between meshing teeth. These high tooth-pressures and rubbing-velocities are a particular problem in hypoid-type gears and demand a special Extreme-Pressure (EP) or hypoid-gear oil. Additives help reduce the galling and local welding of teeth that would result from using regular motor oil.

There is no way to tell how good a gearbox oil is, but if you look on the top of a four-stroke motor-oil can, you will see some letters that give a rough idea of oil quality. The American Petroleum Institute (API) performs a number of tests and then rates its findings in letters ranging from A to E. Letter "A" denotes a lower quality oil while "E" shows that an oil exceeds the highest API test standard.

Before each of these letter designations you'll find either the letter C or the letter S. The "S" is more common because it shows that the oil is suitable for petrol-engine use. A letter C on the other hand, denotes an oil suitable for diesel use. It is also possible to find some popular brands of oil that are suitable for both diesel and petrol-engine use.

Improved oil quality has let the modern motorcyclist become almost casual about choosing oil. But oil's manmade complexity still has not given every lubricant equality or eternal life, no matter how expensive. The golden liquid still returns to a sludgy Texas Tea after hard use. It just takes a few extra miles to reach that point these days. *—David Dewhurst*



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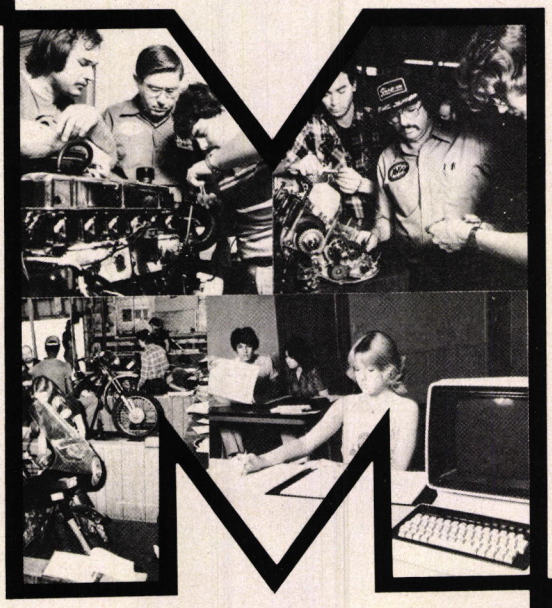

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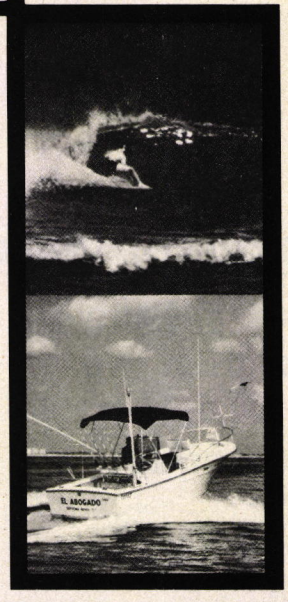

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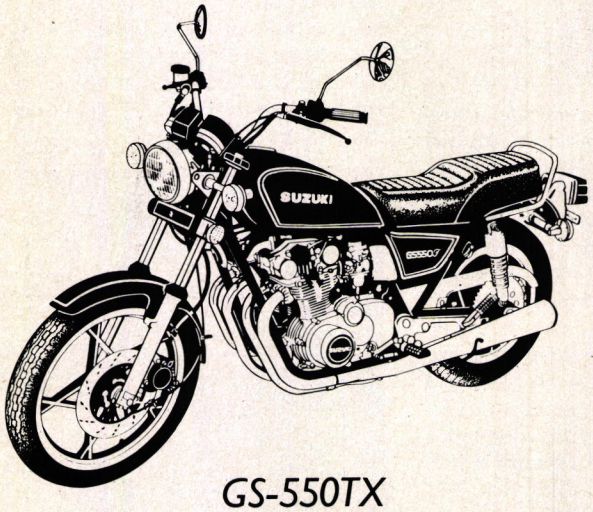

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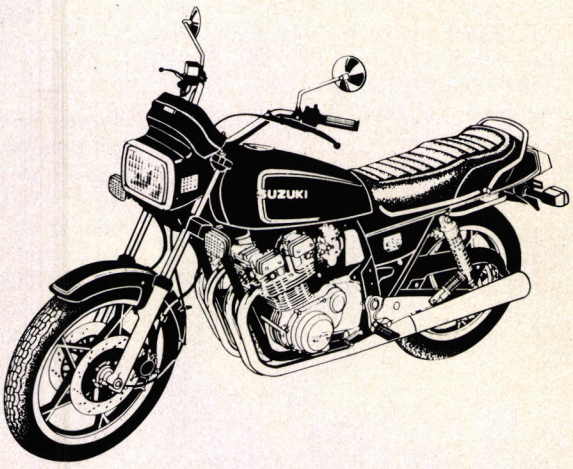

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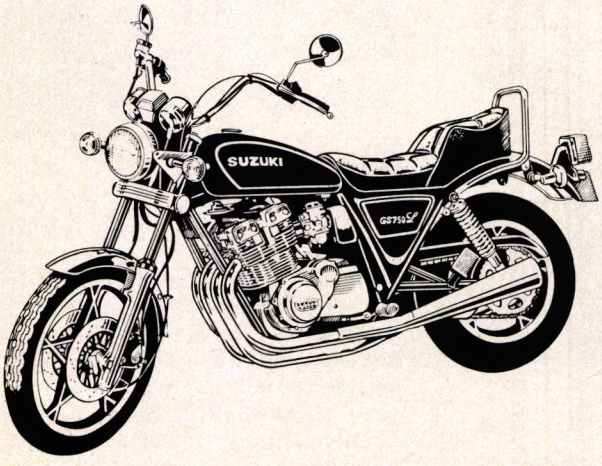

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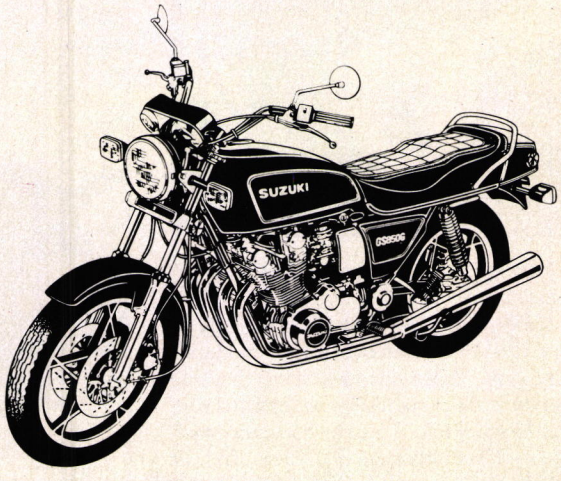


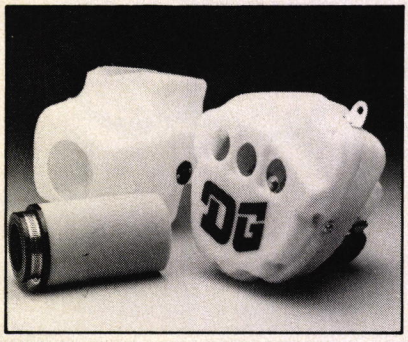
GS-850GX

*Manufacturer's new suggested retail price.

Motomart

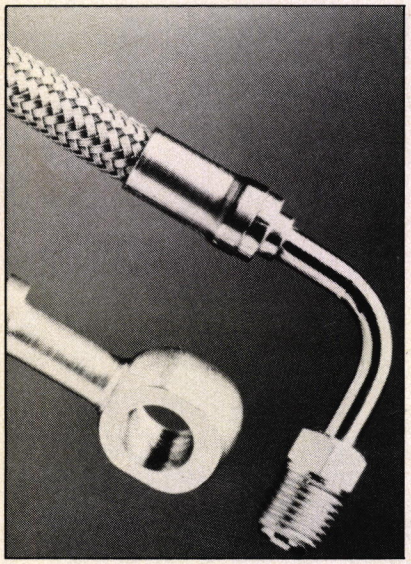
Pitching it down the sales track.

Breathe Easy: A lightweight polyethylene plastic airbox for Suzuki Full Floater motocrossers is available from DG Sports. This is a single side-breather airbox designed to allow more air volume in order to increase throttle response on all power levels. A large-size box for the X-model RM125, 250 and 465cc models goes for $99. A smaller version for the RM80T and RM80X sells for $45. Purchase one at your dealer or contact DG Performance Specialties, 1230 La Loma Circle, Anaheim, California 92806. The phone is (714) 630-5471.



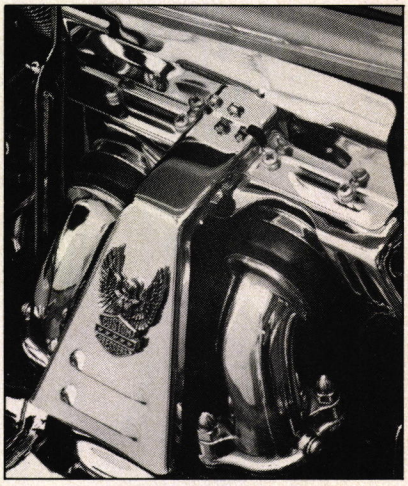
Bigger Baggins: Olympic has a new trunk bag that will expand from a 25-liter capacity to 32 liters by opening a nylon zipper. The bag's hardshell bottom is reinforced with metal inside and out wherever it attaches to the Olympic mounting system. This is topped with soft nylon, and the entire unit is backed by a six-month warranty for materials and manufacturing defects. Olympic says the material is waterproof and washable, and a rain cover is included to minimize dirt accumulation. To expand your information about this bag, write to Olympic Enterprise Co., Ltd., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 2863, Fullerton, California 92633 or see your motorcycle accessories dealer.

Whammo, Slammo ... Zapp-O! It's a cleaner for wheels or for any greasy metal area, such as engines or carburetors. Just apply it, let it sit for 30 seconds and rinse away the dirt, says its manufacturer. The product is also safe to use on vinyl, and Amazon Industries says it won't damage paint or other finishes, either. A 16-ounce can sells for $5.95, plus $2 for postage and handling if ordered by mail. Write Amazon Industries, P.O. Box 55546, Houston, Texas 77055.



Flexing Your Brakes: Cycleflex's replacement brakeline kits offer Teflex stainless hose and Russell Swage adaptors. Russell Performance Products claims the Teflon liner provides firmer braking action and the stainless steel braided wire spiffs-up a bike's looks. You can reach Russell Performance Products, Inc. at 20420 S. Susana Rd, Carson, California 90745; the phone is (213) 639-7151.

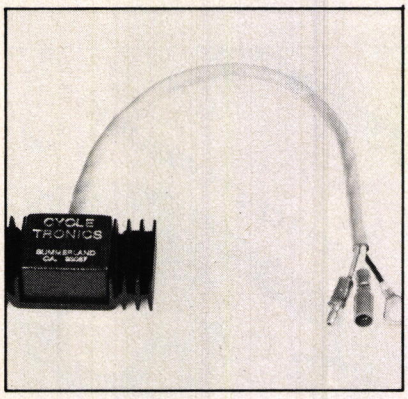
Sportspecs: Team Yamaha's Bob Hannah has added sunglasses to his company's line of sporting equipment. The optically-ground lenses are tinted and claimed to absorb 95 percent of the sun's harmful rays, including ultraviolet. The tortoise shell frames have adjustable temple pieces to provide a good fit. For your pair, with the Hannah logo, of course, send $45 to the company directly: Hannah Racing Products, P.O. Box 2109, Sun Valley, Idaho 83353, or phone (208) 726-4343.

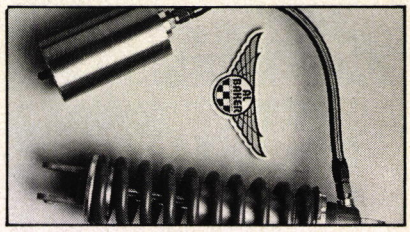


Putting On the Style: Custom Dressers' chromed carb and plug covers have a total of six louvers that are specially designed to keep the air flowing freely. Each carb cover has four louvers and each plug cover has two. Made from 14-gauge steel, the covers cost $52.96 per pair without the emblem and $61.46 a pair with emblem. You can also purchase the emblems separately for $8.50 a pair. Contact Custom Dressers directly at 6421 Cox Ave., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73149; the phone is (405) 672-7564.

Roadwear: Hein Gericke's "long life" leather jacket was made for hitting the road. The jacket is made extra long and has adjustable side D-rings for a close waist fit. Snap tabs cover the zipper pulls on the sleeves and all zippers are black nylon. The leather is 1.1 to 1.3mm thick grade "A" American cowhide. Reinforcement includes leather underarm patches and padding at shoulder and elbow. The men's jacket is priced at $187.63 and the women's jacket is $176.87. To find out where to get your jacket, contact Fitch Wyckoff International, Inc., 305 N. Harbor, Suite C-8, Fullerton, California 92632. The phone is (714) 738-6262 or Telex 182724.

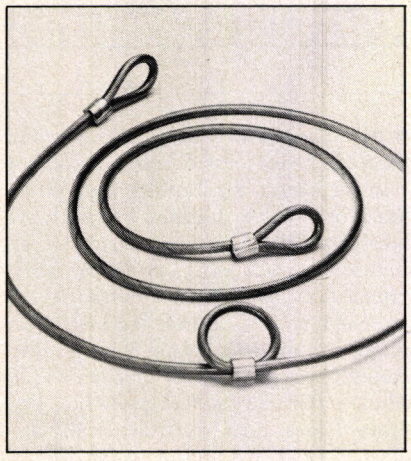
Stop It! After testing and developing for a year, Cycletronics has devised a stoplight modulator for motorcycles. When the brakes go on, the light begins pulsating at a rate of approximately 3.7 flashes per second—the rate recognized by many experts as the best visual warning signal. The modulators cost $24.95 but aren't legal in all states. For more information, write to Cycletronics, P.O. Box 870, Summerland, California 93067, or phone (805) 684-8585.





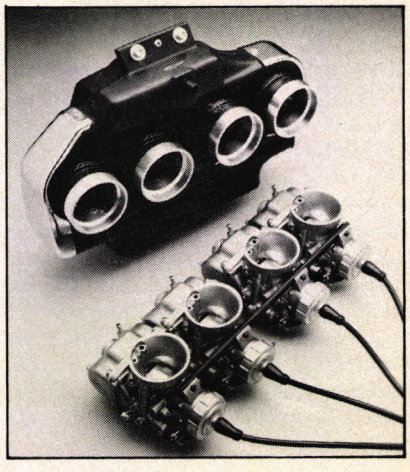
Shock Mods: The Johnny O' Pro-Link shock is a reworked stock CR Showa shock absorber modified by Al Baker R&D. The Johnny O' eliminates high-speed bottoming while allowing the Pro-Link to absorb stutter bumps or larger bumps from chuckholes and rocks. For $75, Al Baker R&D will modify the damping or rebuild an XR or CR Pro-Link shock. The firm also provides a huge oil reservoir that contains a gas diaphragm. It increases the oil capacity from the stock 220cc up to 520cc, thus eliminating almost all damping fade. The Johnny O' Pro-Link oil reservoir is available for $124. For more information, contact Al Baker R&D, 6944 Santa Fe Ave., Hesperia, California 92345. Phone: (714) 244-5425.

Up for Grabs: Racing System's Grab-On grips feature a hard plastic cartridge covered by a unique foam sleeve. The comfy grip is a system that offers shock-absorbing handlebar control, and it's rebuildable too. If, for instance, the sleeve is the only part that becomes damaged, that can be replaced as a distinct unit—you don't need to re-purchase the whole system. You can grab on at dealerships or accessory shops.

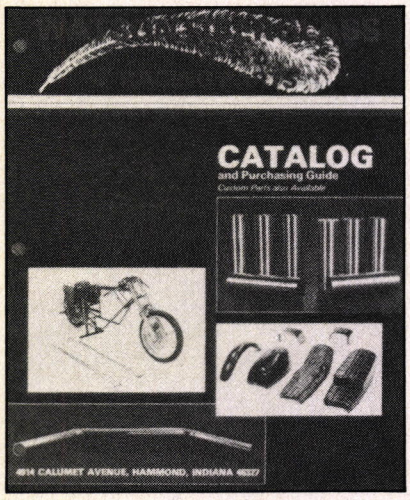


The Bear Facts: Not everyone has a Golden Grizzly protecting his motorcycle. Rock Solid Products has designed a security system that locks front and rear wheels independently, forcing a would-be thief to cut through both sides in order to bag his prize. Its brass-plated wires are interwoven to withstand a breaking force of over six tons, and it's vinyl coated for scratch and clank resistance. For more information, write to Rock Solid Products, 2950 De La Vina St., Suite 2, Santa Barbara, California 93105, or phone (805) 687-5345.

Flow Power: Vance & Hines has developed a 34mm Mikuni carb kit that will bolt onto '80 and '81 Kawasaki KZ1000s and 1980 and '81 Suzuki GS1000s and GS1100s. V&H's aluminum adapter rings allow the carbs to fit directly onto the stock airbox assembly. Included in the kit are carburetors, stainless steel throttle cable and aluminum adapter rings. To flow with the pro-stock racers, see your local Vance & Hines dealer, or send $2 for a catalog to Vance & Hines, 14010 Marquardt Ave., Santa Fe Springs, California 90670. The phone is (213) 921-7461.

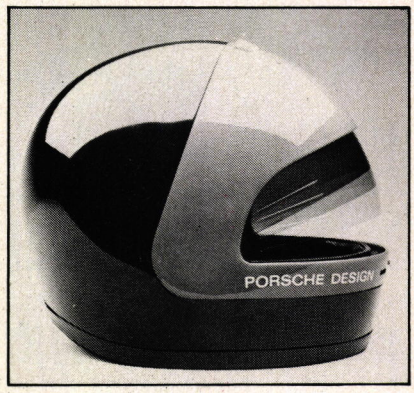


Motomart



Body Beautiful: Watson Fiberglass has published a picturebook especially for your racing fantasies. The company specializes in producing replica fiberglass body parts to lighten and customize motorcycles according to their racing applications. Some of Watson's fiberglass tanks provide greater fuel capacity than their stock counterparts. The catalog is $2.50 from Watson Fiberglass and Racing Parts, 4914 Calumet Ave., Hammond, Indiana 46327. Or you can dial either (219) 932-7000 or (312) 862-0900.

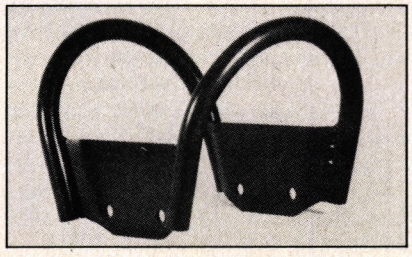
Chain Action: NEP now manufactures a Cushion Torque Kit to fit motorcycles with 530 and 630 chain sizes. The kit includes NEP's TUFF-ONE nylon rear sprocket, a case-hardened steel countershaft sprocket and a self-lube chain. This system is claimed to free you from many maintenance problems. You can purchase the kit or buy only the sprockets. For more information, contact NEP SALES, INC., 3439 Ocean View Blvd., Glendale, California 91208; phone (213) 248-8402.

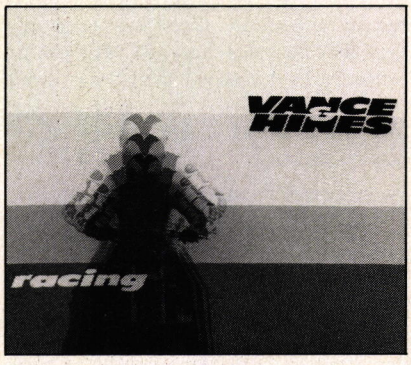


Space for Your Head: Romer's aerodynamic touring helmet incorporates useful, space-age innovations. The Porsche Design helmet's lexan face shield can be adjusted to any of seven positions and closes against soft seals at top and bottom to ensure against wind noise. Fog and heat are directed out from the helmet by a patented adjustable vent system. For $199.95 you can purchase your D.O.T. certificated, Porsche designed helmet from a nearby distributor. For more information or the name of the distributor nearest you, write to Fitch-Wyckoff International, Inc,. 305 N. Harbor Blvd. C-8, Fullerton, California 92631. The phone is (714) 738-6262 or Telex 182724.

Getting Carried Away: Connecticut Cycle Accessories presents a new line of accessories with corresponding hardware called "Easy Streets." The selection is wide: round- and square-tube luggage carriers, fixed-position carrier rests, adjustable carrier rests, high- and low-pad sissy bars and a 12-inch custom pad bar with zippered pouch. Select the mounting kit that fits your bike's make, model and year to go along with the accessory. For more information contact Connecticut Cycle Accessories, South Park St., Willimantic, Connecticut 06226; or phone (203) 525-4240.

Brace Yourself: The Ultimate Source has a fork brace to fit all late-model street Hondas, Kawasakis, Suzukis and Yamahas. The brace is designed to keep your bike's fork legs in proper alignment by connecting them with two loops, fabricated from 4130 chromoly tubing, that are attached to two stamped plates. The plates are slipped between the fender mounts and the sliders, thus providing added rigidity to the fork assembly. The brace comes in an electrostatically-applied black oven-cured paint for $79. To order write The Ultimate Source, 1888 W. San Carlos, Dept. CG, San Jose, California 95128; or phone (408) 295-0207 or (800) 538-7518.





Speed Files: Vance and Hines Racing has published a nifty new catalog of performance products for Suzuki and Kawasaki motorcycles. The company's 32-page book is packed full of parts ranging from exhaust systems to wheelie bars. You'll also get caught up in such items as engine kits, racing camshafts, performance-piston kits and smooth-bore carburetors. To receive your catalog, send $2 to Vance and Hines Racing, 14010 Marquardt, Dept. CG, Santa Fe Springs, California 90670; or phone (213) 921-7461.

GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY LARRY WORKS

COMING SOON

• Last month's preview of a few **1982** Suzukis was just the first trickle of new-model information passing over the dam. But now the dam's burst, the **torrent** is on and there's news spilling all over the place. First out with a complete '82 lineup is Suzuki, which followed up its first few paint-and-tape 1982 bikes with the announcement of a 32-model sales force for the '82 selling season. And there are more than just a few surprises. Most of the **unexpected** comes in the form of new machinery, naturally, but some of it shows up in the absence of new models in several categories.

First, count all the rumors of a Suzuki turbo, turbo 650, **turbo** 650 shafty or turbo 650 shafty Katana as unfulfilled—at least for now. No impellers, wastegates or boost gauges are to be found among the new bikes. And while you're looking, don't bother squinting around for the rest of the **PE** line; you'll only find the one, a 175. But while you're mulling over what won't be in Suzuki showrooms soon, consider what you will find. . . .

• You'll discover, for instance, a GS1100E, with a clear line of ancestry that shows up in the inset photo. The lines are Katana, certainly, but softer, less radical. But if the styling—round headlight, round instruments and all—is something short of radical, the bike itself just might not be. Claims of increased engine performance and hints at **10-second** quarters are part and parcel of the new E-type, and only the testing will bear them out. While the performance has yet to be tested, though, the big Suzuki does carry some impressive credentials. **Anti-dive** air-spring fork, front and rear suspension adjustable for four damping and five preload settings for a start. Then a 5.8-gallon fuel tank, thumb-positioned choke lever and an oil temperature gauge add to the equation. And to top if off is a claimed dry weight of 522 pounds for the 16-valver.

• If you want to shed 11 pounds, 327cc and a heavier buy-in and insurance tab, there's the revamped **GS750E.** You still find anti-dive **air-spring** fork, though without the 1100's damping and preload adjustments. Gone, too, is the Katana link. No, this is a more recognizable Suzuki sport bike, even though it arrives with round headlamp and instruments—which include an oil temperature gauge and sidestand check light. You also get shocks adjustable for preload/damping, a remounted choke lever, dual horns, rectangular mirrors and your choice of black or red.

• But imagine for just a minute that the swoop of the 1100E did appeal to you; it was just the size that didn't. In that case, the GS550M might start to look attractive. What goes into the 452-pound 550 is more than just the two-tone seat and the **black chrome** exhausts, though. There's a promise of function beneath the **café** cosmetics. Triple discs, air-spring fork, preload/damping-adjustable shocks, six speeds and eight valves spell one thing: a 550 that will stoke the fires of the middleweight class. And the 550M's **6.1-gallon** tank, quartz-halogen headlamp and needle-bearing swingarm should keep them hot.

• Or it could be that your personal thermometer is set at a different temperature. Perhaps the GS750T, the official Suzuki factory **Q-**

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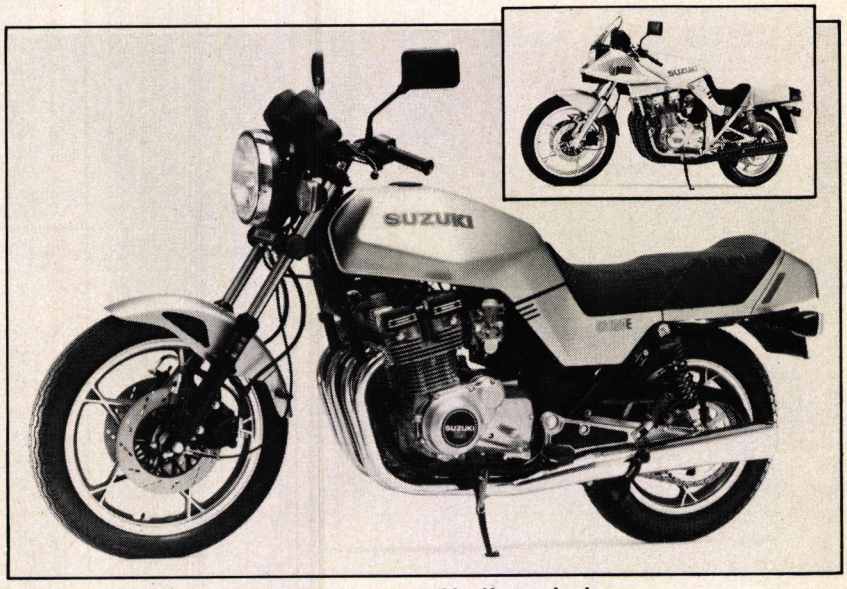
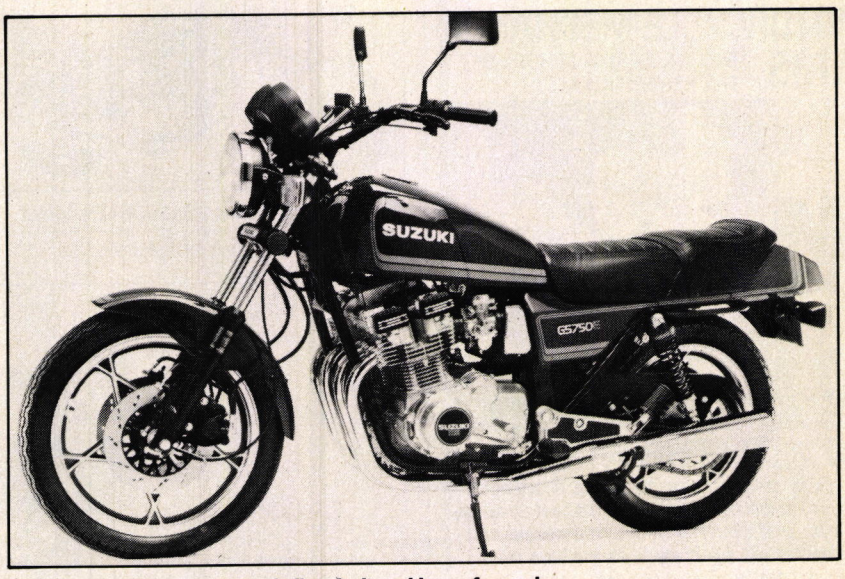


Smoother lines of the GS1100E fail to conceal its Katana heritage

Which did come first, the chicken or the egg?



Restyled GS750E wears anti-dive fork and lots of promise

Remember, Suzuki's slogan for 1982 is "Performance Above All."

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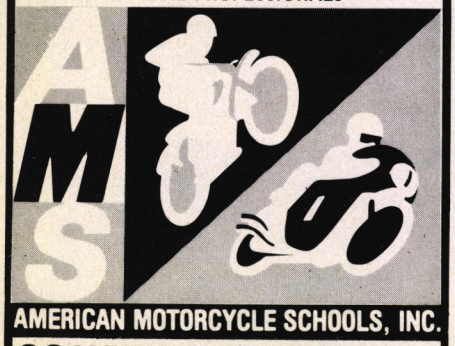

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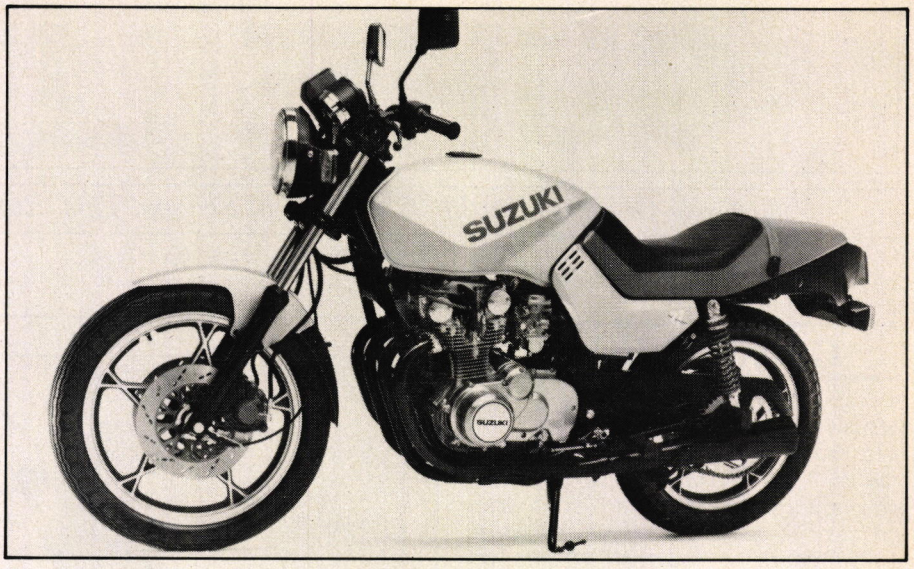
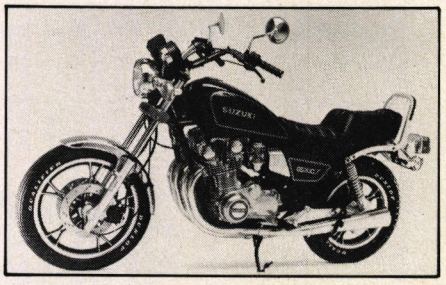


Huge 6.1-gallon fuel tank dominates the GS550M's styling for 1982

But underneath the flashy clothes is a familiar eight-valve four.

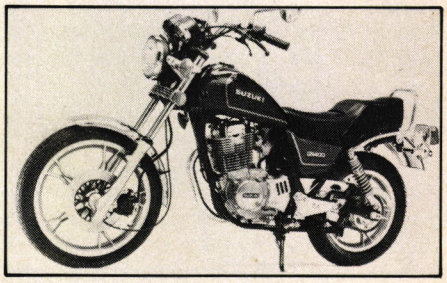
ship, does the trick. What you get is styling more in the American idiom but still a few steps shy of apehangers. You get the suspension of the 750 E-type, but the T's look is shiny, not black. And the trade includes the E's triple discs in return for the T's drum rear and single-disc front—and a six-pound weight saving. Throw into the bargain a fat tire on a 17-inch rim, too.

• Take another step closer to the factory-custom look and you end up with the GS1100L. From the slight rise of the T's seat, you step into the full step of the L's redesigned saddle. And from the T's straight-leg fork, you shift to the L's air-spring, leading-axle fork. From the beginning, the 1100L announces its boulevard intent with an **eight-valve** engine, shaft-drive, 16-inch rear wheel and raised



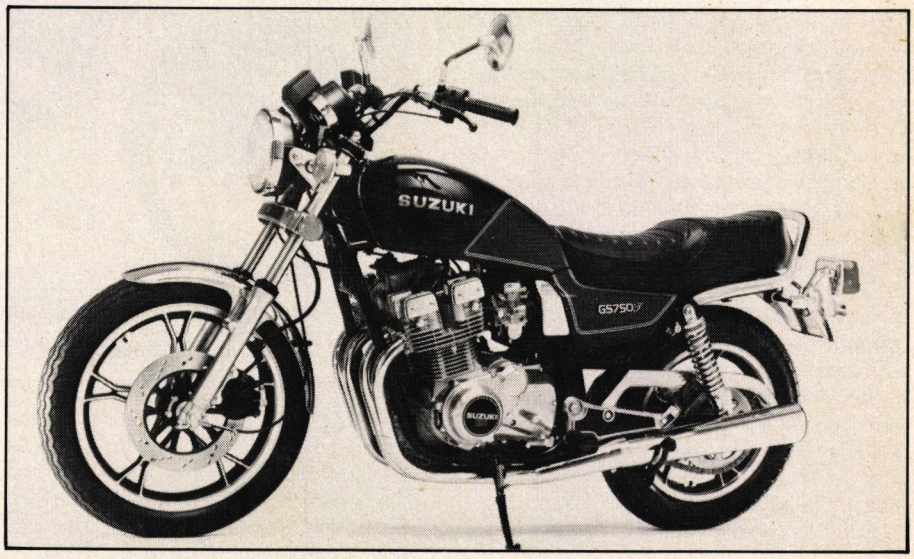
Stepped seat marks GS1100GLZ's looks

Style from an eight-valve 1100.



GN400 wears similar shapes

It's got the look; it's got the look.



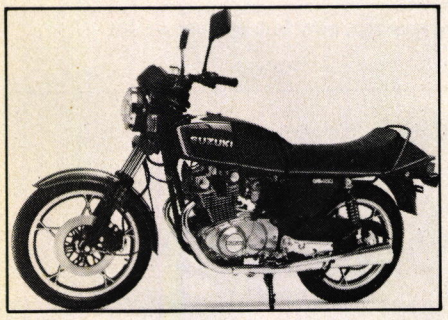
Super Sport GS750T has the fast engine, one disc and a fat rear tire

Could be the Superbike sleeper.

white letters on the tubeless tires.

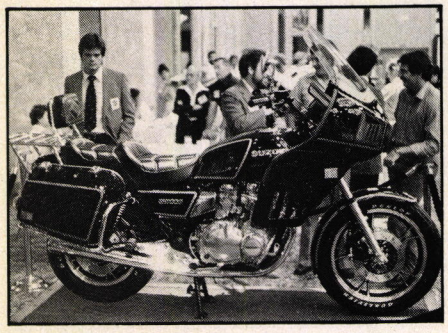
• From there, it's just a hop, skip and a displacement jump down to the stretched look of the **GN400T.** New paint, a larger headlight and the addition of Suzuki's new mags mark the single-cylinder econo-cruiser. But the intent is the same as the 1100L's, only smaller: long and low.

• Lying between the 550 and the 400 is a virtual blanket of 450s, with one for almost any occasion. Start with the **450E,** which shows off the 450cc DOHC twin wrapped in a package of sporty trim. For 1982 it arrives with black air-spring fork and blacked-out shocks, as well as a transistorized ignition with electronic advance. If you thought that Suzuki was going to put the 450 engine to no more good use, think again. The same engine package has been massaged into a **T,** an **L** and a **TX,** covering not only the sport segment, but the standard, cruiser and economy contingents as well.



450E gets air-spring fork, new ignition

One plank of a raft of 450s.



GS1100GKZ full-dress shafty

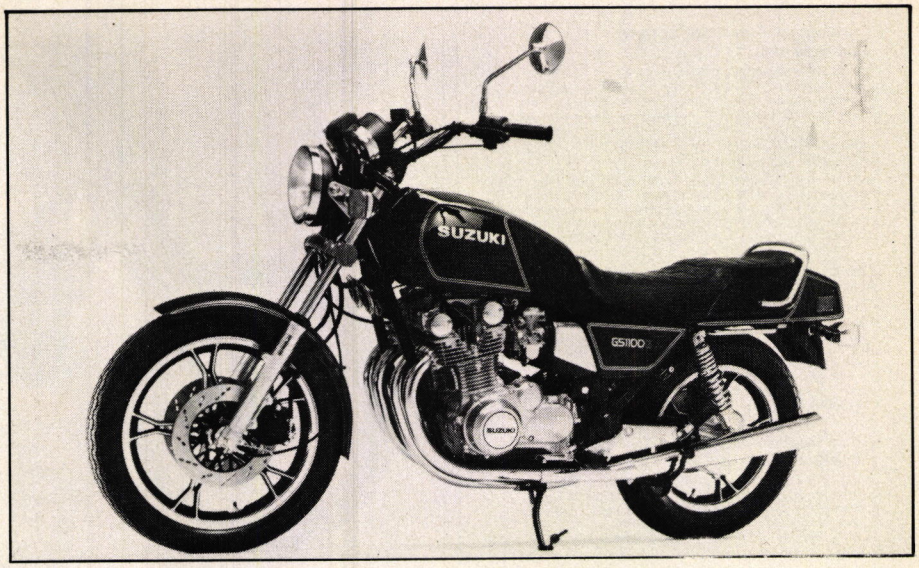
Scenicruiser of the Suzuki lineup.

• It could be that your version of a street is one that carries on and on, into the horizon. And maybe your version of a street bike is one that follows that road. Then for you, there's the **1100G,** an eight-valve shafty that shares its styling with the 850G as well. They also share air-spring forks, adjustable-damping shocks, **tubeless** tires and 5.8-gallon fuel tanks. And despite a displacement difference between the 1100G and the 850G, they also have in common fuel gauges, triple-disc braking, gear indicators and quartz-halogen headlamps—in case the horizon is a little dark when you get there.

• For serious **long-haul** types, the GS1100GK might do. Add to the G-type a frame-mount **fairing,** saddlebags and an adjustable backrest and you start to get the picture. Then dial in damping-adjustable air shocks and it all gets clearer. Figure in a rubber engine-mount system, case guards and the higher load rating of wider tubeless tires and the whole thing gets pretty obvious.

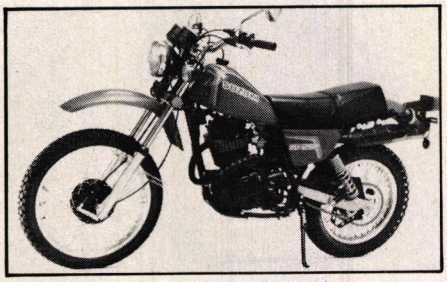
• But if the road you choose has dirt on it, or if the dirt you ride has some stretches of pavement, perhaps the **SP500** will suffice. You still get the four-valve SOHC thumper mill of last year, but an **air-spring** fork and 7.7 inches of suspension have been added into the deal.

• Moving completely off the tarmac, there's the RS175, which passed through the maelstrom of new-model revamping with little



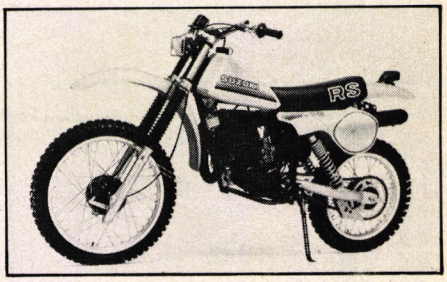
Shaft-drive GS1100G serves as role model for the lookalike GS850G

One gets you there fast; one gets you there FAST.



SP500: on-again, off-again streetbike

The same split personality as 1981.



1982 RS175 with new graphic treatment

Striped for action.

Full Floater suspension and a host of detail changes for the only-child PE175

For now, anyway, the PE175 is one of a kind.

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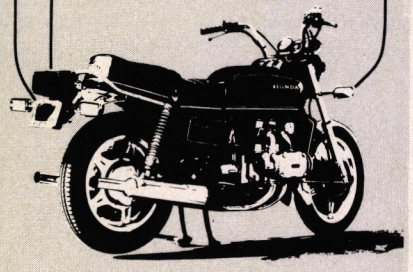
Deter thieves with this weatherproof self-contained alarm. A tough ABS housing protects the solid state adjustable sensor sounding off through dual horns–after 45 seconds of 110db noise, the alarm automatically rearms. With interlock switches behind the chrome-plated steel cover and impossible-to-remove mounting hardware, the Dualarm is tamperproof. Only $49.95.

The Dualock Multi-Brite Taillight Coupler lights up your life!
Improve visibility and safety with this simply wired taillight coupler (only 7 color-coded wires!). Turns rear signals into running and brake lights, without interfering with turn-signal functioning. The solid state Multi-Brite–a tiny sealed package–a big improvement in your safety. Only $24.95.



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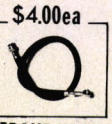
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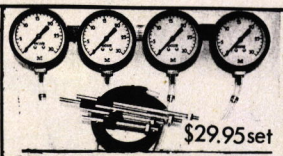
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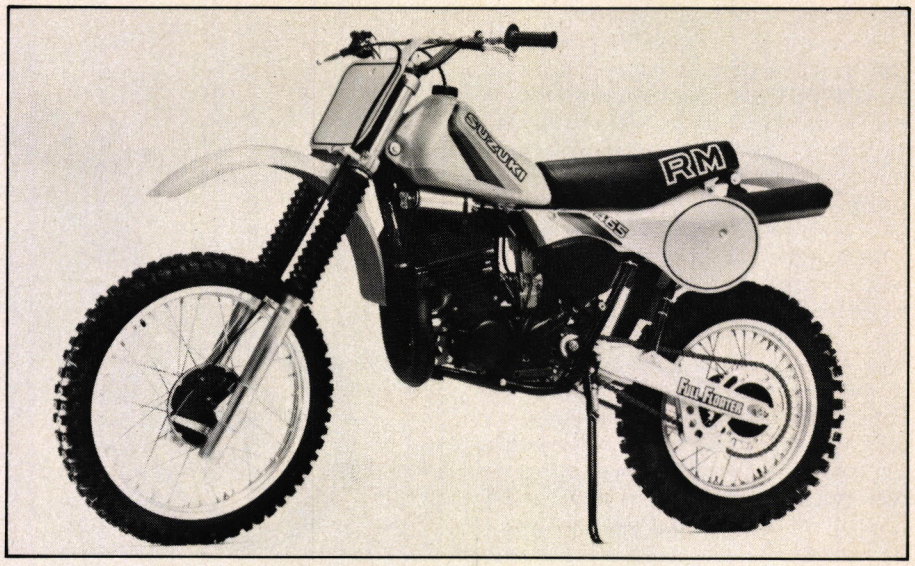
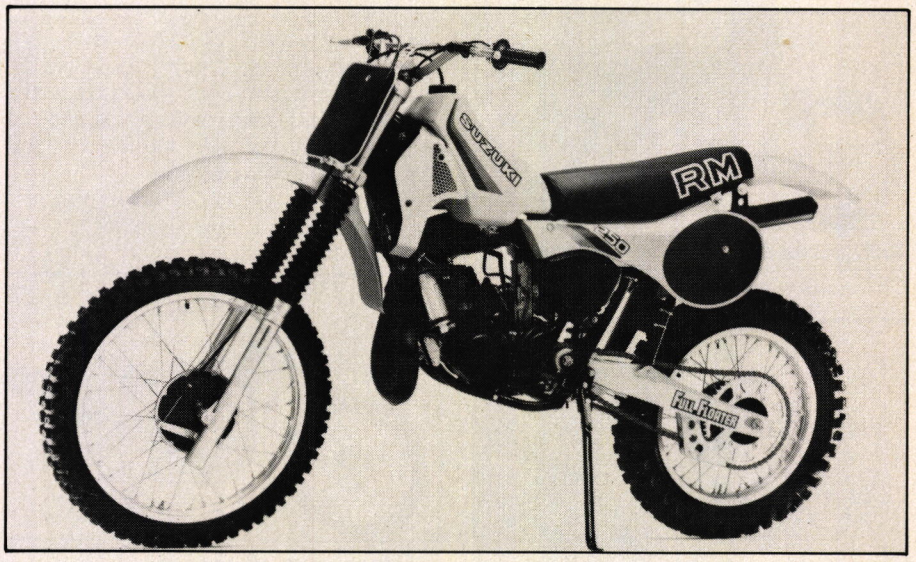


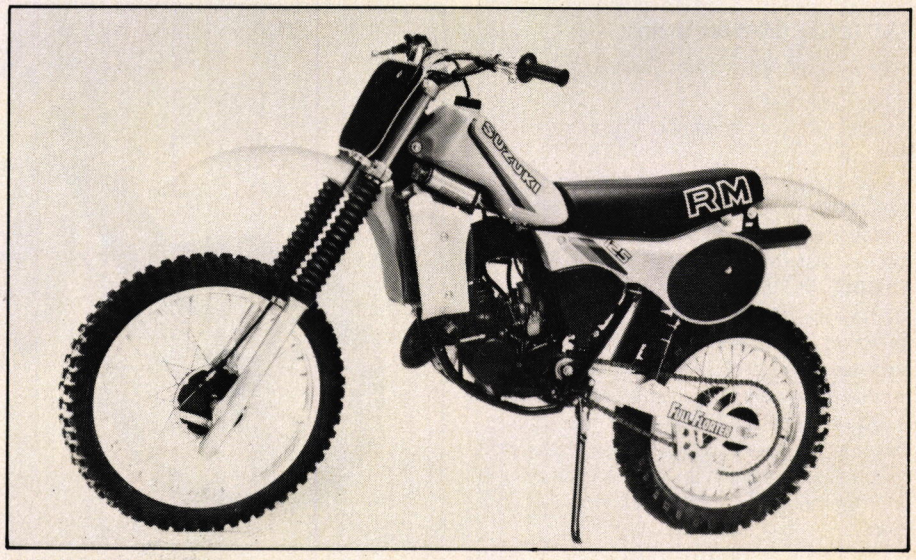
Revamped, rethought RM465 includes four-speed gearbox, new fork and carburetor

Tossing the Open class wide open for 1982.



New-from-the-ground-up watercooled RM250 has twin radiators, new fork and frame

Water wings for the quarter-liter crowd.



1982 RM125 has Full Reed engine, but the rest is familiar

You don't fool with a winner.

more than a change to RM-style tank **striping.** If you liked it last year, you've got a second chance.

• Slide a step or two closer to competition and you arrive at the lone PE, a **Full Floater 175** with a remote-reservoir gas/oil shock. The Floater rear and the air-spring fork yield 10.6 inches of wheel travel at each end as well as a ground clearance of 13.6 inches. Aside from the claimed increased engine performance, detail changes abound on the PE. For 1982, the enduro bike arrives with quick-adjust front brake and clutch cables, folding gearshift and rear brake levers, straight-pull spokes and an optional centerstand.

• Even though Suzuki is presently a little sparse on enduro bikes, the same situation doesn't carry over to motocrossers, which arrive in 60cc, 80cc, 125cc, 250cc and **Open-class** displacements. Suzuki opted to keep its 'classer at last year's bike. For 1982, the RM465 received a **four-speed** gearbox, a new flat-slide carburetor and a lighter leading-axle fork with low-friction bushings. The crash-prone will be happy to notice the folding gearshift lever as well.

• Even more changed was the **RM250,** which will arrive with a new twin-radiator **watercooled** engine. The 250 also got a new fork, new flat-slide carburetor and a new frame that contributes to a lighter dry weight for 1982.

• As changed as the RMs are, the eighth-liter contingent will probably still recognize the RM125. But even on the **125,** all is not the same as in 1981. The watercooled engine is now Suzuki's **Full Reed,** and the whole package is lighter this time around.

FEDERAL CASES

• High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in New Jersey have been opened to bikes carrying two riders. The two-rider restriction bears some further examination, however, because in making the change to the **HOV** access, New Jersey conceded that a two-rider motorcycle was as fuel-efficient as a four-passenger carpool. Fascinating. No doubt the sale of inflatable **mannequins** for motorcyclists wanting handy passengers will soar in the Garden State.

• Other interesting implications appear in Hawaiian bill S30. The bill, which is being held for the moment in that state's Transportation Committee, would **require** that all street-legal motorcycles be equipped with either a **windscreen** or windshield.

• Another Hawaiian bill would require that all **insurance** companies there give 10 percent **discounts** to riders who signed affidavits promising that they would wear helmets when they ride.

• A Maryland bill, H1322, requires that ORV operators there carry a permission slip from the landowner when they cross privately owned land. A pass from the **hall monitor** probably wouldn't hurt, either.

• And riders of stretched bikes will be most

Continued

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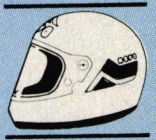

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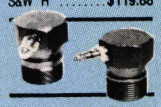

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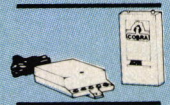

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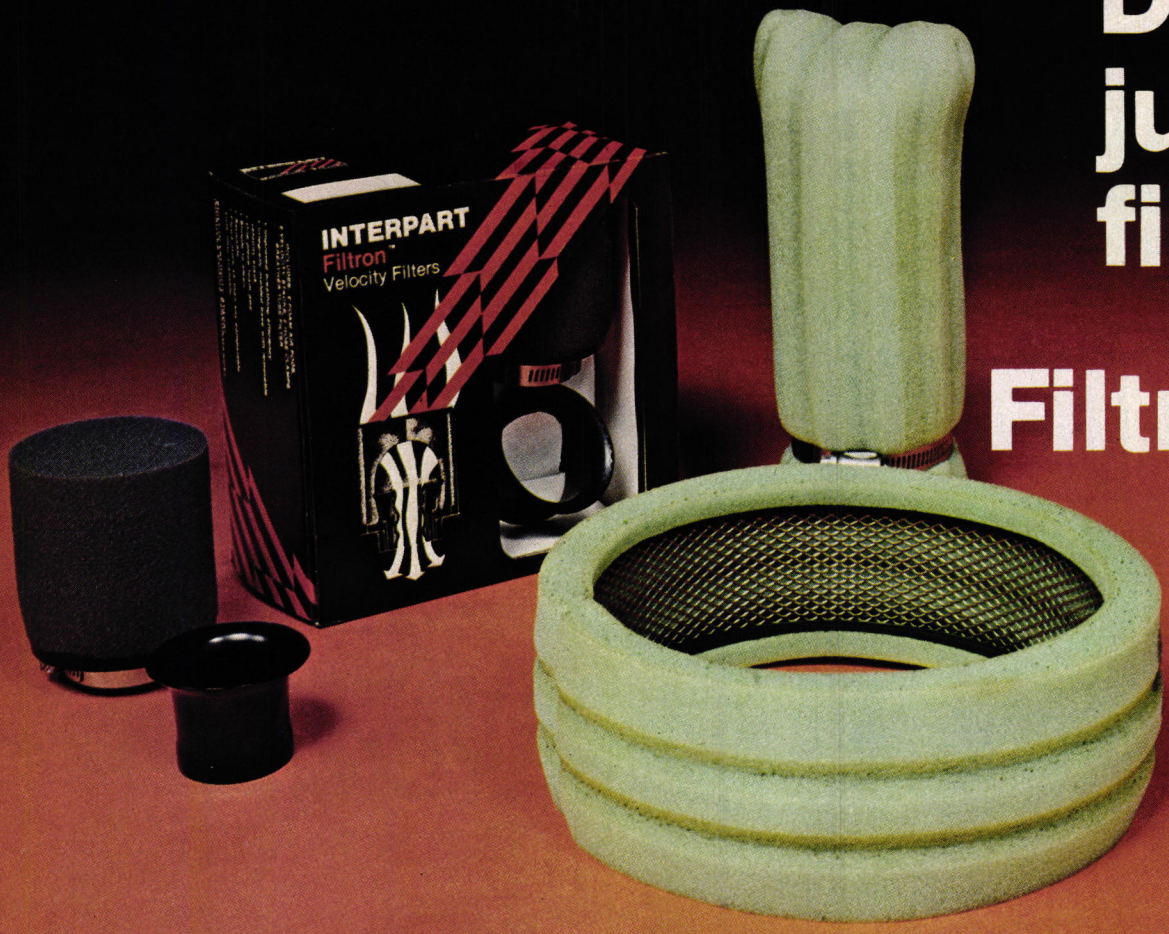

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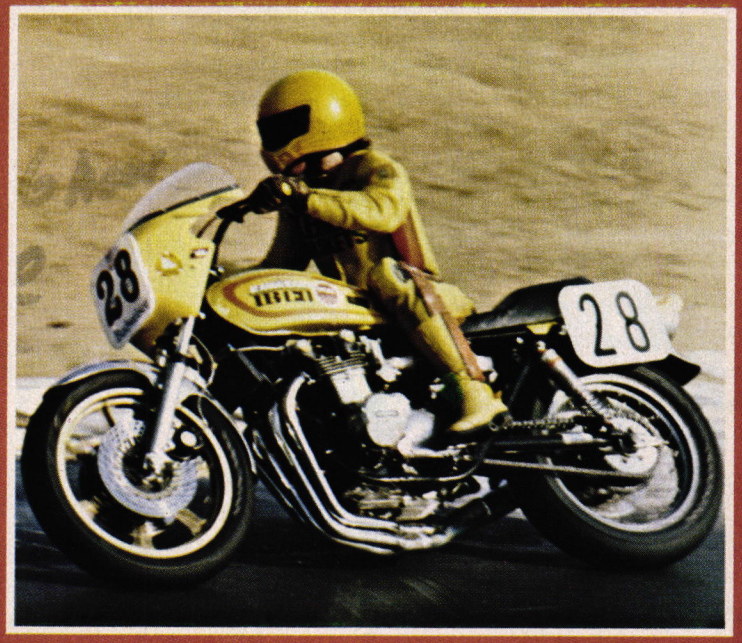

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RIDE/REPORT:

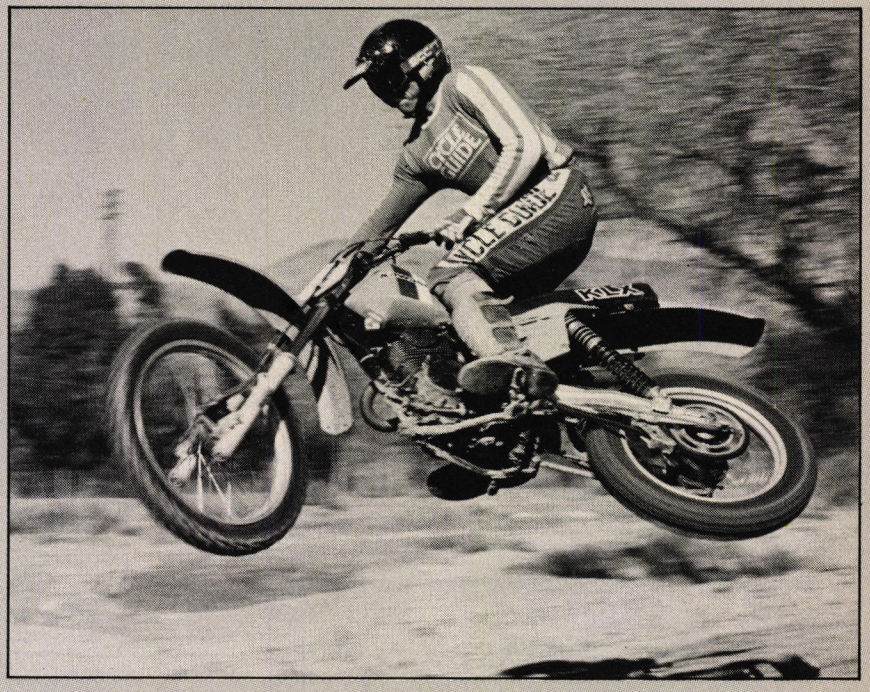
White Bros. KLX

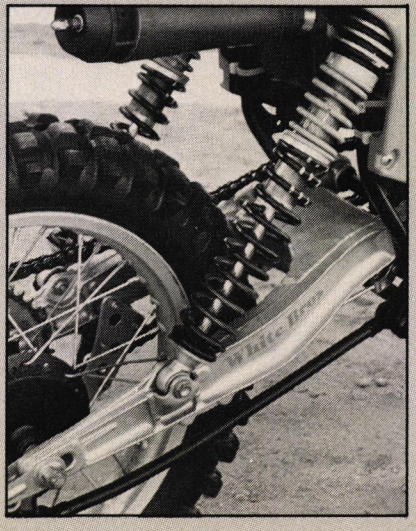
Nice bikes don't always finish last.

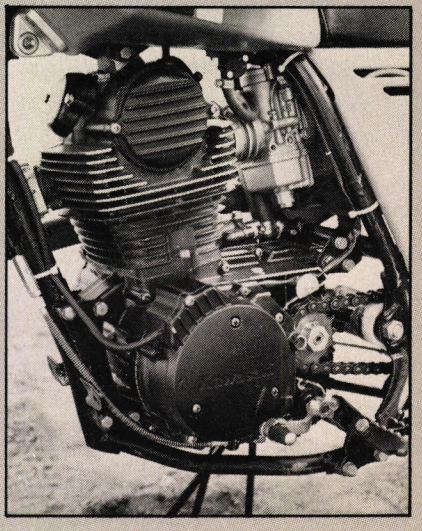
• Kawasaki's KLX250 was a pleasant little thumper that never had enough power. Besides lacking engine response, the KLX apparently was minus the power to excite people, and Kawasaki stopped making the bike in 1980. But there are still a lot of KLXs out there, and White Bros. knew that beneath the Clark Kent exterior lurked Superbike.

White Bros. proved itself right by building a Superbike that took on bikes three times its own size and won the four-stroke national championship last year. And the flying KLX streaked to victory at the Anaheim stadium race in January. The little guy actually took on the big bikes and won.

Your timid KLX can turn into that Superbike, too. All it takes is a call from the nearest phone booth to White Bros. Go-fast goodies will come flying to the rescue. You can get a 72mm piston that bumps engine displacement to 262cc and ups the compression to 10.5:1. Then, White Bros. will clean up your cylinder head and open out the exhaust while retaining the stock valves and guides—although operated by S&W valve springs. You can also get a White Bros. cam that really lets Superbike flex its muscles.





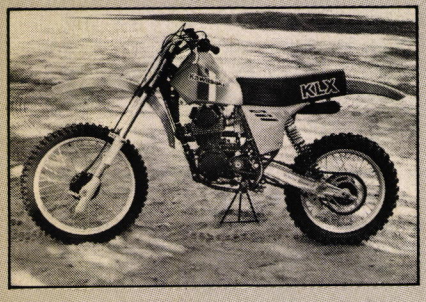


With its two-valve lung pumping harder, the KLX needs to breathe a little easier, so White Bros. has an exhaust system with a 1.5-inch inside diameter and a Supertrapp silencer. There's also a 34mm DelOrto carburetor with an accelerator pump to feed the bike the high octane food it needs.

The engine is now ready to rid the world of two-strokes, but Superbike needs some stronger legs before it can be successful. White Bros. forced the KLX into a phone booth and changed it into a pair of Moto-X Fox forks and Works Performance shocks. With 11.0 inches of travel up front—supported by a healthy 19 psi of air—and 11.25 inches of travel at the rear the KLX takes on a totally different character.

It snarls through its Supertrapp silencer and snaps instantly with every blip of the throttle. It feels bigger than its 262cc, but out on the track there is no mistaking that the KLX is not a 600cc monster. Superbike certainly couldn't be called slow, but plenty of two-strokes will fly past it down the straights. Where the little KLX shines, though, is in its ability to stay on the power longer. It now has enough power to excite, but not enough to intimidate.

The suspension, too, is a lot more fun. The long-travel fork and laid-down shocks can't be called plush—indeed, on smoother tracks they feel a little too firm—but out in the rolling whoops the KLX glides along with ease. An aluminum handlebar made by Renthal in England also helps take



out some of the track's harshness. In concert with its new suspension, the stock KLX chassis is stable enough in a straight line to handle more speed than even the kitted motor is capable of providing. In turns, however, Superbike pushes its front wheel and feels a little less enjoyable than some of its two-stroke competitors.

But it's really unfair to compare the KLX to anything without valves. It is not meant as a direct competitor, but as a high-speed alternative. And if you compare Superbike to its large-capacity four-stroke counterparts you will find that competitive fun comes in all shapes and sizes. The winner does not always have to be the biggest and gnarliest. Because the KLX has already shown that a more civilized character can still win races.

—David Dewhurst

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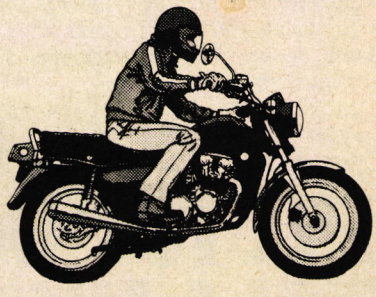

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affected by Massachusetts H6324. The bill calls for all motorcycles registered in that state to have two separate **braking** systems.

- Rider education apparently isn't too popular in Iowa, where HF22 would eliminate all state-funded **rider training.** The bill is presently lodged in the Iowa Education Committee.
- That bill dovetails oddly with Iowa's **requirement** that riders complete an approved rider education program prior to receiving a license. The implementation of that program was to have begun in 1981, but HF872, if passed, would delay the requirement until 1982.
- The use of microwaves continues to be a **sore spot**—and a source of legislation. For example, an appellate court in Indiana overturned a previous ruling that banned the use of radar detectors as constituting portable police radios. The move put Indiana in the overwhelming majority and left only Connecticut, Michigan and Virginia still banning private radar detectors.
- The same subject popped up in Utah, where the state legislature voted down a bill prohibiting the sale and use of **radar** detectors. At the same time, however, Utah killed a measure that would have deep-sixed police radar.
- Hard lobbying by the AMA assisted in the death of New Hampshire **HB635.** The bill stated that events of "special significance" would have required permits from all municipalities within a 15-mile radius of the event's site. Further, the promoter of such an event would have had to provide all added police protection for that same radius. The clear target of HB635 was the Laconia Classic roadrace, and the bill also gave discretionary authority to that state's Commissioner of Safety to determine whether or not an event had "special significance." Although the bill passed the New Hampshire House, it **died** on the Senate floor.

HARD CASH

- Check the calendar. Now check your wallet. If there's anything in the latter, the former indicates that this is the best time to buy a motorcycle—at least a 1981 model. **Rebates** are the name of the game, and if your plan is to buy low and ride high, now is the time for it.
- Someone *is* paying attention. As proof, Canada recently dropped its traditional five percent **excise tax** on motorcycles larger than 250cc. But the reason behind the fact is far more interesting than the fact itself. The Canadian government has come to the conclusion that it should encourage motorcycle use as an energy-saving tactic.

RUMORS

- With the reality of the 1982 models hovering nearly in sight, the rumor vultures have settled on the major manufacturers with a **vengeance.** In fact, the fluttering wings of the carrion-eaters of could-be are hovering over Honda even as you read. Certainly, the most

promising of the Honda talk centers on the **M4,** a mysterious designation that spies report is actually the long-awaited CX-derived **vee-four.** Insiders say that the bike, in both its sport-touring and factory-custom versions, has already been seen. The site was Sears Point Raceway, and long-lens types report that spyscopes caught Honda in the act of shooting promotional material. What else the spy types report is equally fascinating. The watercooled 750cc M4 apparently is descended from both the CX500 and the NR500 roadracer.

• Naturally, the vultures weren't satisfied with taking only one bite out of Honda's lineup. They also report that the CB400T, CM400T and A are gone. But lest you lose heart, they've reportedly been replaced with **450cc** versions designed to fill the same market slots.

• A new slot, however, will apparently be filled by the hinted-at **SC** portion of Honda's 1982 lineup. And, according to the cream of the local gossips, the SC group will include 450cc, 650cc and 750cc versions. Those purveyors of possibilities go on to suggest that the SC series is a return to a simpler day, a cry for a kind of motorcycle all but swept away in the headlong rush to factory customs: the plain-vanilla, **civilian** motorcycle. If you can remember back to a time when the Kawasaki LTD was the exception to conventional styling, you're probably able to imagine what the SC bikes look like.

• Another designation in the alleged 1982 Honda schedule has tongues wagging. It's the GL1100D. There are reportedly both Interstate and non-Interstate versions of the **GL1100** already on Honda's new model list, so the **D-type** appears to be something **new.** And insiders, ever ready to cast hints, are saying that the D-model will be Pro-Link, and will be styled something like the CX500 Turbo. Wait and see.

• A bit of confirmation on last month's rumored **CRs** brought down the rumor flock like a handful of stale bread to park pigeons. What they were feeding on was the report that the CRs are completely redesigned from 1981, with new shocks and adjustable **damping** fore and aft, as well as repositioned radiators and extremely light weight.

• Running down the list of rumored Hondas also shows an **ATC200E,** which could only indicate electric start. But while the E makes perfect sense, what can you make out of the USNX? The designation almost defies description. Unless, of course, it refers to the 500cc street single rumored here last month. Or maybe, just maybe, it's the four-cylinder 550 that's being hinted at broadly these days. As sound as any of the rumors might—or might not—be, there's no telling on the **USNX** until Honda's 1982 lineup is ready for dealer's showrooms. And then you read about it in Coming Soon.

• But with Honda out of the way and Suzuki's cards firmly on the table, you didn't think the rumor mill would stop churning, did you? Not by a far shot. Take, for example, what's being said about Yamaha. Life in the Tuning Fork Factory is said to be a bit hectic these days.

Continued

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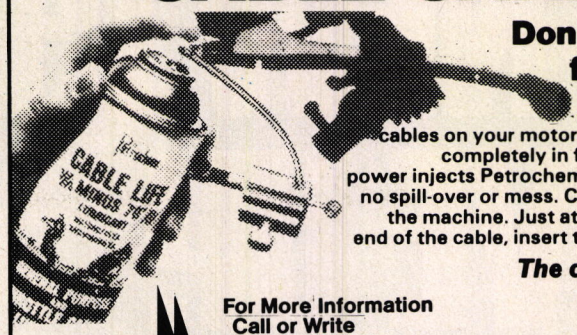

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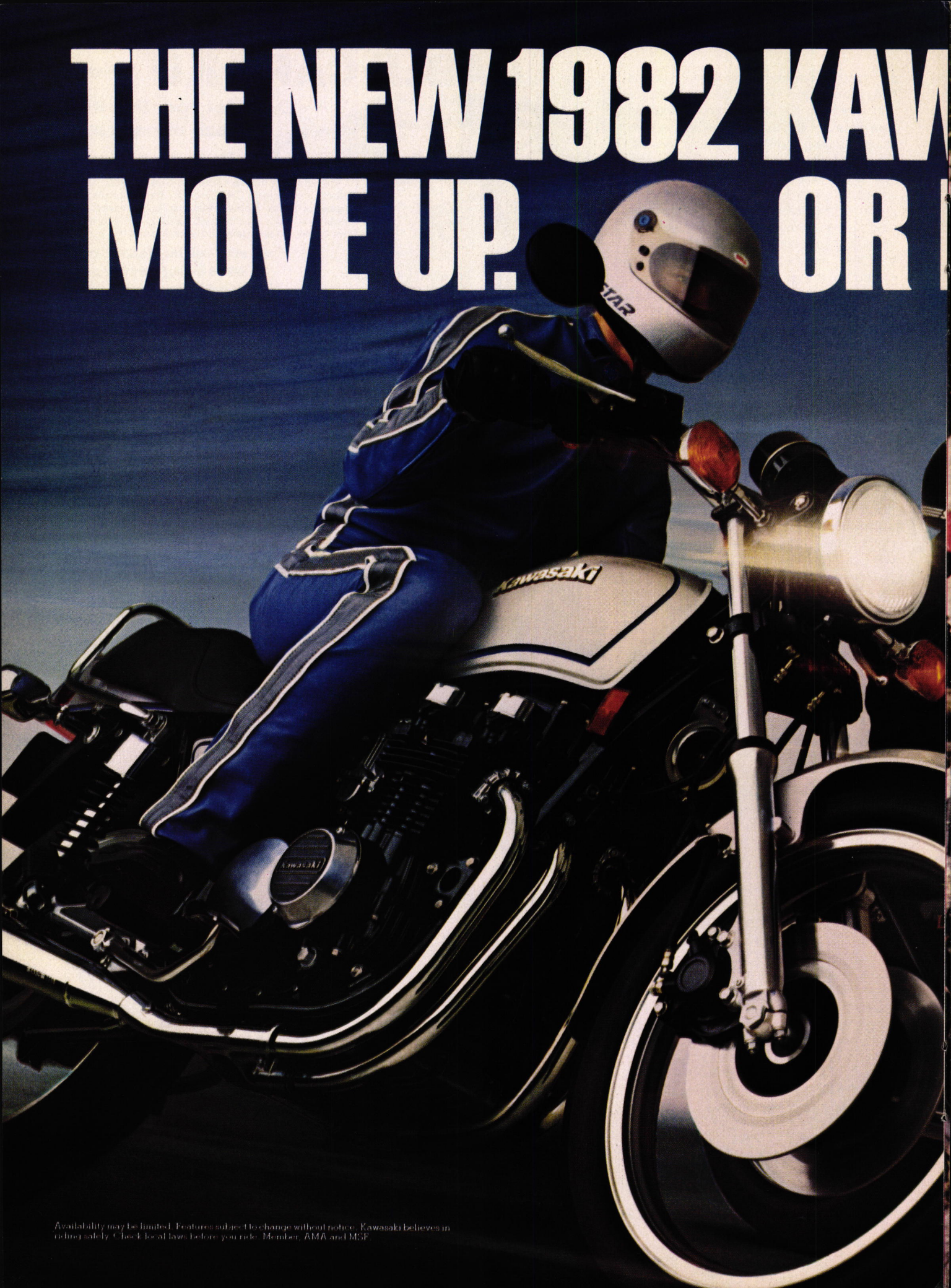

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And some of that fevered activity supposedly concerns a new **Seca 550.** One that for 1982 is painted (why is no one surprised?) **red.** That story would seem to confirm reports that the Seca 550's mission profile has been altered to throw it square in the path of the GPz550.

• And what's being repeated about the venerable XT/TT500 is that it's no more. According to usually reliable sources, the skinny is that Yamaha has outflanked the competition by first putting its big-thump engine into a new frame, then bolting on **state-of-the-art** suspension—and then pumping the displacement up to 550cc.

• If the talk about Yamaha's two-strokes is anywhere near the truth, the displacement-bump is a popular step right now at Yamaha. What's circulating is that the YZ465 has grown into a **YZ490** for 1982, complete with power valve and rising-rate rear suspension.

• Naturally, Kawasaki hasn't been left unmolested by the gossips. What's going on at **Kawasaki** this year concerns more than a handful of new machinery—some say as many as eight competely new models—and stories are circulating about a commitment to both watercooling and motocrossers. Further stories tell of Kawasaki's recent fascination with the **three-wheeler** market—and possible expansion to get a larger share of it.

• BMW, too, is the subject of speculation lately, some of it idle and some quite pointed. For starters, there are whispered conversations that the **R65** has been reconfigured into something . . . uncharacteristic. According to some high-placed wags, the 1982 R65 could give the **Katana** 1000 a run for its money—and yours—in the area of singular styling.

• As if hinting around at 1982 Beemers weren't enough, some loose-tongues are already starting to take potshots at BMW's 1983 model year. And one of those shots is aimed directly at the oft-rumored K4, which has turned up in these pages more than once. Reportedly, as a sign that things are happening with the top secret project, the designation has been changed to **K583** . And also reportedly, that designation refers to a shaft-drive inline four with BMW's Monolever rear suspension that's to be structured for "American-style" touring.

Top secret four-cylinder BMW K583

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• The rest of what's going around about

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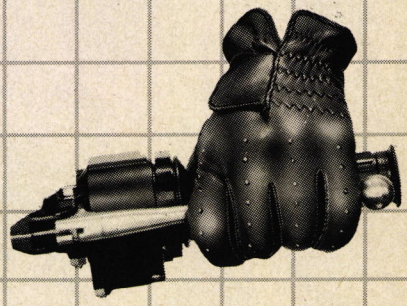

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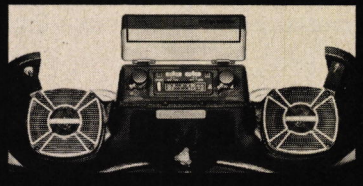

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BMW is that the revamped **street-only R80** won't be ready until 1983. The bike, which is said to be ultra-light and which also uses a Monolever rear end, looks to be the subject of speculation for the months to come.

• Another subject for further speculation is said to be the Harley-Davidson Porsche-Design **vee-four**. Word trickling down from on high is that the bike is slated to begin production very soon.

• Let's just say that this raft of rumors didn't even touch you. You remain unfazed. You might be interested in a bit of could-be that sneaked out of the mysterious East. No, not there, **Washington.** Reportedly, plans are underway to scrap a major source of annoyance for motorcyclists: the 85-mph **speedometer.**

APART FROM THE CROWD

• Souvenir plates, magazines, programs, teacups and just about everything else commemorating the Royal Wedding were selling well, so why not a **souvenir Triumph?** Why not, indeed. Hence, the Bonneville Royal. To distinguish the Royal version from the common, plain-Jane Bonnie, the souvenir bike wears Marzocchi shocks, Bing CV carbs, a limited-edition number plate and a special plaque at the steering head. The plaque reads, "In celebration of the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer." And if you're more than the run-of-the-mill collector, you can even get two different Bonneville Royals: an American and a British model. Both bikes have chromed gas tanks, but the American version's tank is smaller; and the Yank bike has wire wheels to the British model's cast aluminum mags. Further, the British Royal runs twin front discs; the American bike has only a single front disc. And while the American bike has polished cases and a black frame, the British Royal sports a silver-painted frame and matte black at the engine cases and fork legs. The **honeymoon** period with either bike is reported to be the same, however.

• Something else from Europe might be a little deflating for macho types. A recent European study shows that the relative **danger** of racing motorcycles is low. The study, which compares fatal accidents in various sports, places car **racing** at the top of the list of things that can kill you. Below it are canoeing, motorboating and deep-sea fishing. Someplace down at the bottom of the list, next to boxing, lies motorcycle racing. A perfect excuse not to go fishing in a canoe.

• File this under **Stranger Than Fiction.** If you really want to, you can now buy or rent a videocassette on safe riding techniques. It's true. You can now learn to ride a motorcycle without mounting-up—through the magic box. And your instructor is that renowned authority on safe riding techniques Evel **Knievel.** Reports are unconfirmed, however, on whether or not the lesson is conducted from the parking lot of Caesar's Palace. •

FORBIDDEN FRUIT:

Honda CB1100R

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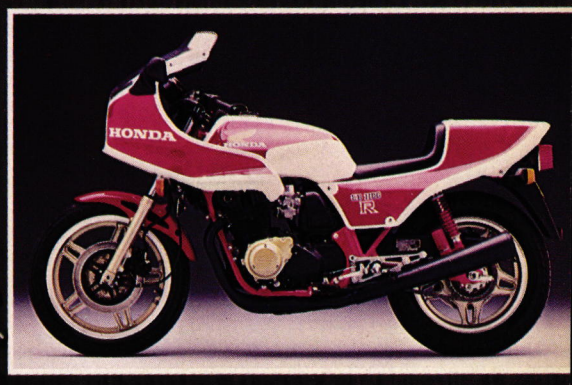


BY PAUL DEAN

It's a crazy idea, but let's try it anyway. Let's pretend for a moment that somehow, somewhere, you could buy *the* definitive total-performance motorcycle, an uncompromised, undisguised, shamelessly pretentious hyperbike. And let's say that this "ideal" machine would incorporate only the best features of today's most revered performance bikes—the staggering power of the Suzuki GS1100, the deft handling of the Honda CB750F, the roadrace styling of the Ducati Super Sport, the irresistable sex appeal of the GPz Kawasaki—all rolled into one memorable motorcycle.

It doesn't take much imagination to visualize how incredibly exciting a bike like that would be. But it isn't as farfetched as it might seem. Because if you lived in Europe or Australia, you wouldn't have to play make-believe games about such a motorcycle; you could just stroll into your local Honda dealership and order up a CB1100R, a motorcycle that fits those all-star criteria as though it had been vacuum-formed around them. Sure, it's expensive (about $8000 a copy), and it's also in extremely short supply (only 1000 were built this year to serve England, France, Germany, Holland and Australia), but the point is that it's *there*.

The counterpoint is that prospects for distribution of the CB1100R *here* are anything but bright. It was built, we're told, just to give Honda a legal racer's edge in the Streetbike Class roadraces that are popular in the aforementioned countries. But Honda officials here have told us that the low vol-

Continued

ume of sales that an 11R would be likely to generate in this country wouldn't justify the expense of getting it EPA- and DOT-certified; nor does the company wish to make the kind of strong anti-social statement that the CB1100R would constitute in the eyes of the establishment. No such model, therefore, is planned for Honda's 1982 lineup, and chances are that you'll *never* find one lurking in your dealer's showroom.

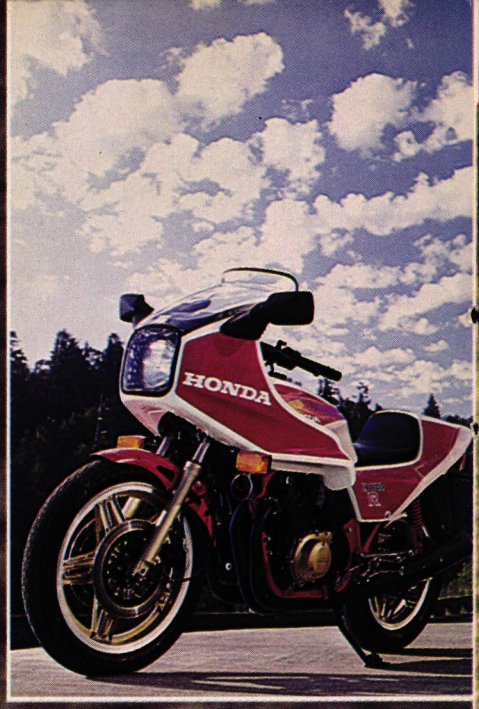
You can, then, appreciate why, when we learned that there was a CB1100R on the West Coast, we were prepared to move heaven and earth to get our hands on it for an evaluation. The bike had been bought in France and shipped to the States by Alan Lader, co-owner (along with brother Randy) of the motorcycle accessories manufacturing firm of Pacifico, Inc.; and thanks to Lader's overwhelming generosity, "moving heaven and earth" consisted of simply showing up at Pacifico's headquarters in Gresham, Oregon and throwing a leg over the bike. And after four straight days of living with his popping-fresh R-model, I can state with full confidence that it is one of the most magnificent motorcycles I've ever been around.

But how could it be anything else? It is, after all, the very latest in a generation of Honda Fours that doesn't have a poor performer or a second-rate handler anywhere in it. The design dates back to Honda's immensely successful RCB endurance roadracers of the middle Seventies, ultimately evolving into the CB750/900-series streetbikes that are the staple of the company's current model line. And the CB1100R is the culmination of what Honda has learned with the concept, both on and off the track, since those first RCBs. So if the 11R excels at flat-out, high-speed corner-bending—which it most certainly does—it's only because that's what it was engineered to do in the first place.

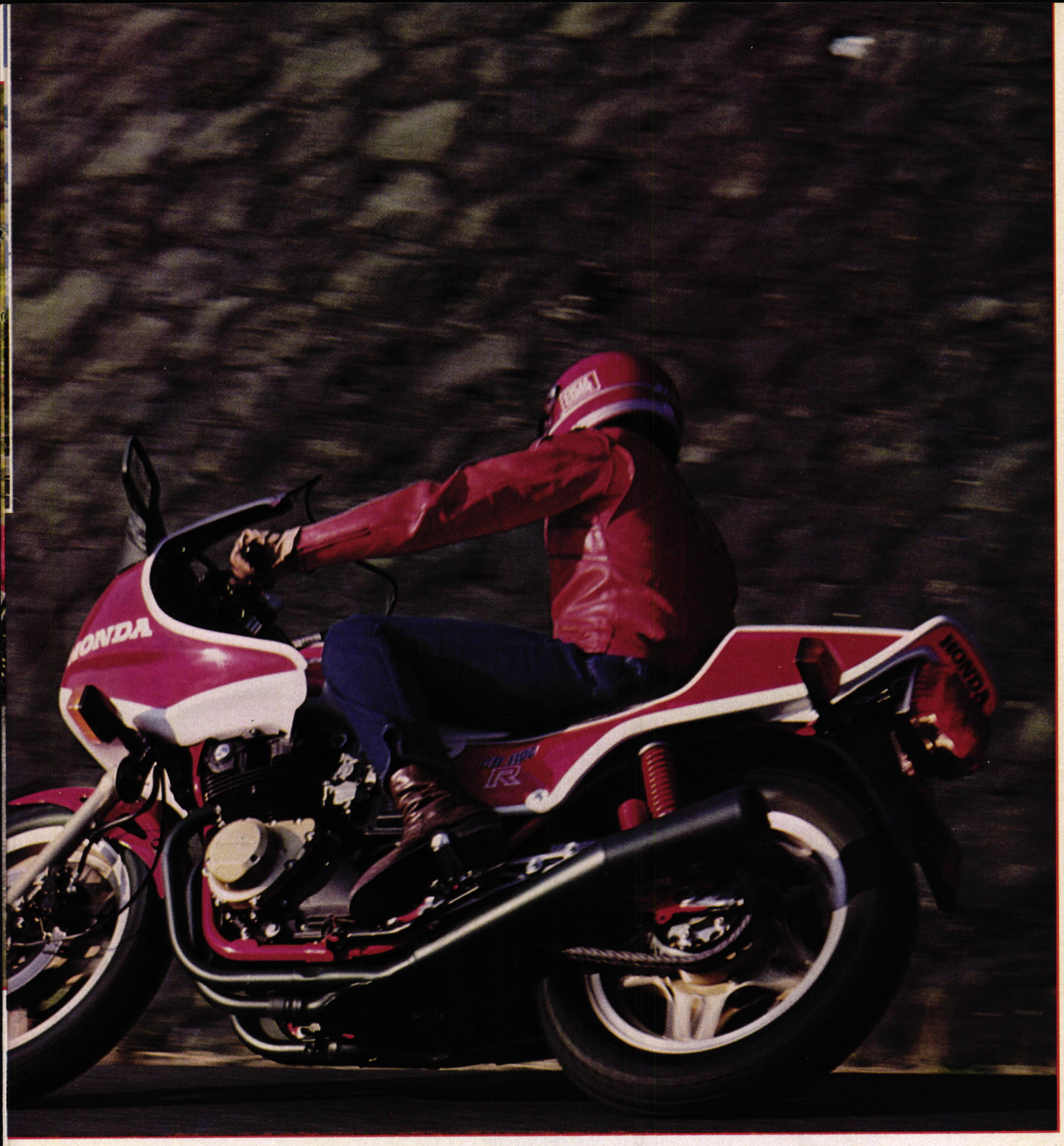
Don't, however, be led astray by the R's racy alter ego; don't think that being an ass-kicking roadracer means that it's necessarily a quirky, snarling beast on the street. Rumors to that effect have been circulating, but don't believe them; I found the bike to have a friendly, normal, perfectly linear power delivery anywhere between idle and the 9500-rpm redline. There are no peaks, no valleys, and the R can even lug smoothly and powerfully from as low as 1500 rpm in top gear.

That's one way in which the Honda's 115-horsepower motor is a dead-ringer, performance-wise, for the GS1100 Suzuki's 105-horse powerhouse. The GS is a paragon of temperance for a bike that can run quarter-miles in the low elevens and turn 140 mph on the top end; and the Honda is just as civil, even though its top speed is on the omigod side of 150. And despite having taller overall ratios in each gear than the Suzuki, the CB11 still accelerates with the same whiplash-inducing ferocity as the GS11. In fact, since the CB has 10 more ponies than the GS and almost 20 fewer pounds to propel, with equivalent gearing it would flat put the Suzuki on the trailer—in the quarter-mile, in any kind of through-the-gears acceleration and in roll-on contests from any rpm in any gear.

Don't look for a host of high-tech achievements to explain the 11R's stellar performance, though. Indeed, the 16-valve engine is little more than a CB900 motor that displaces 1062cc by virtue of a 5.5mm bore increase. Oh, there's a higher compression ratio, all right (10:1 vs. 8.8:1 on the 900), and the dual overhead cams are ground with greater lift and duration. And a magneto-type capacitive-discharge ignition supplants the 900's battery-powered transistorized system. But aside from those few differences, and the 1mm-larger (33mm vs. 32mm) Keihin CV carbs, the state of tune is the same as on the 900. Even the 40.4 mpg that I averaged on the 1100 is evidence of its less-than-radical engine.



There are, of course, a few reliability-enhancing differences between the 900 and 1100 engines: a wider Hy-vo primary chain, larger-diameter wrist pins and higher-grade main- and rod-bearing inserts. The clutch springs are stiffer, as well (a difference you can feel in the lever pull), and the downtube-mounted oil cooler has a larger capacity. And although all of the gear ratios are the same as the 900's, a little more attention supposedly is paid to the quality of the gear material and its subse-



quent heat treatment.

That may be true, but I had to wonder if maybe a little extra attention is paid to the assembly of the entire gearbox. Because rearset linkage and all, Lader's 1100 was the slickest-shifting Honda street bike I've ridden in a lot of years. The lever throw was short and crisp, and the whole operation was devoid of the missed gears and rejected changes that seem to typify Honda gearboxes.

There are other differences between the 1100R and 900F engines, but they're germane to handling, not horsepower. For one, the R-model doesn't use the rubber engine-mount system of the American version of the CB900. And while that permits a bit more engine vibration to find its way to the rider via the footpegs and fuel tank—most noticeably at around 4000 rpm—it also means that the motor can act as a frame-stiffening member. In addition, the alternator (on the left end of the crankshaft) and the ignition unit (on the right) both have been made more compact, thus allowing smaller, narrower covers that even are beveled on their lower edges. Consequently, the 1100 can be herded around corners at utterly absurb lean angles without fear of ever banging either of them on the pavement.

The same priorities went into the routing of the flat-black 4-into-2 exhaust system. The header pipes are small in diameter (being only single-walled rather than double-walled as most chrome-plated Japanese OEM pipes are) and tucked neatly out of harm's way inside the frame's lower cradle tubes. So with the high rearset

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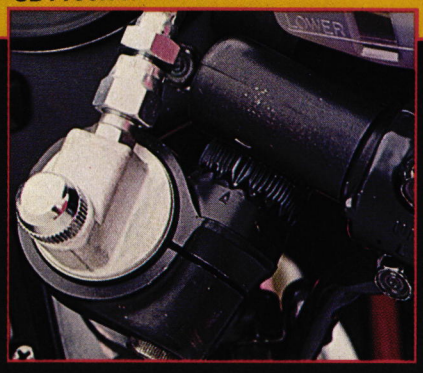
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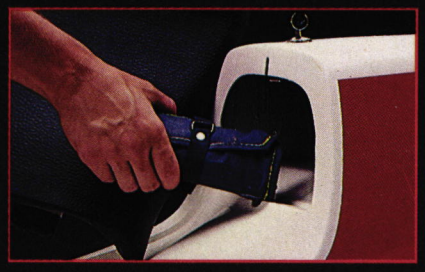

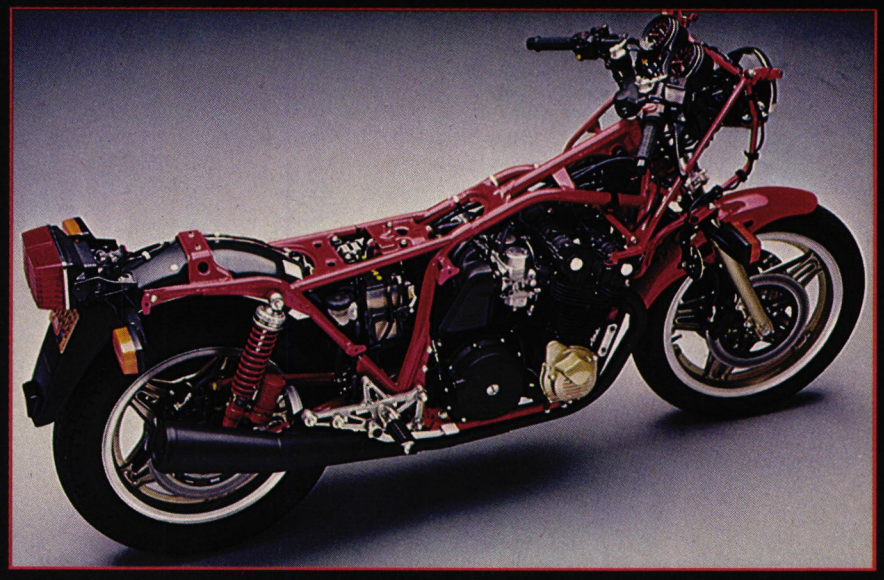

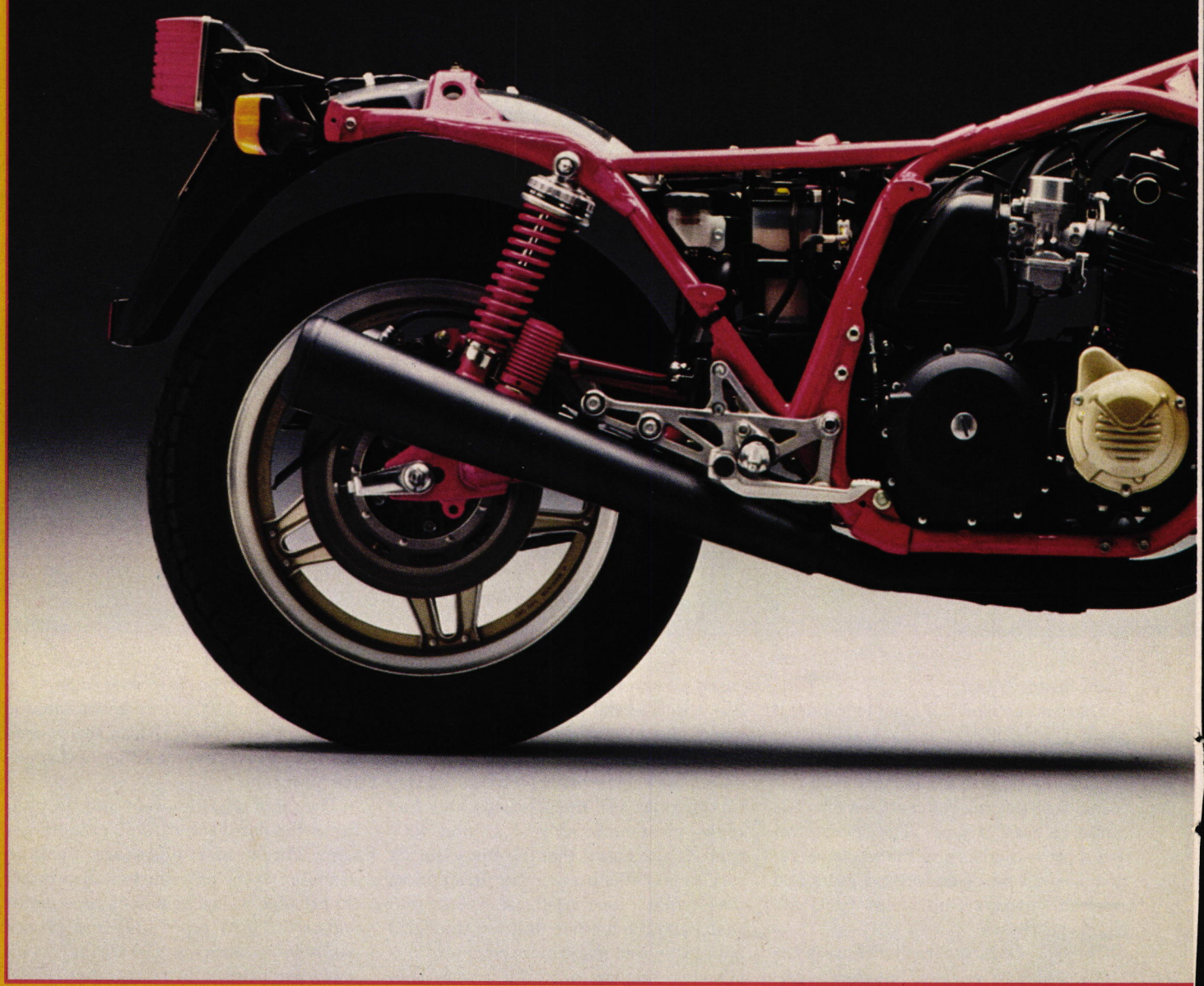

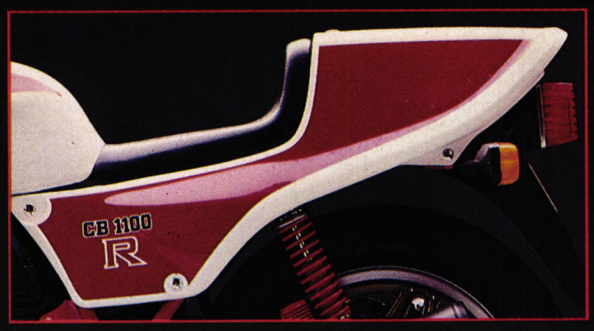

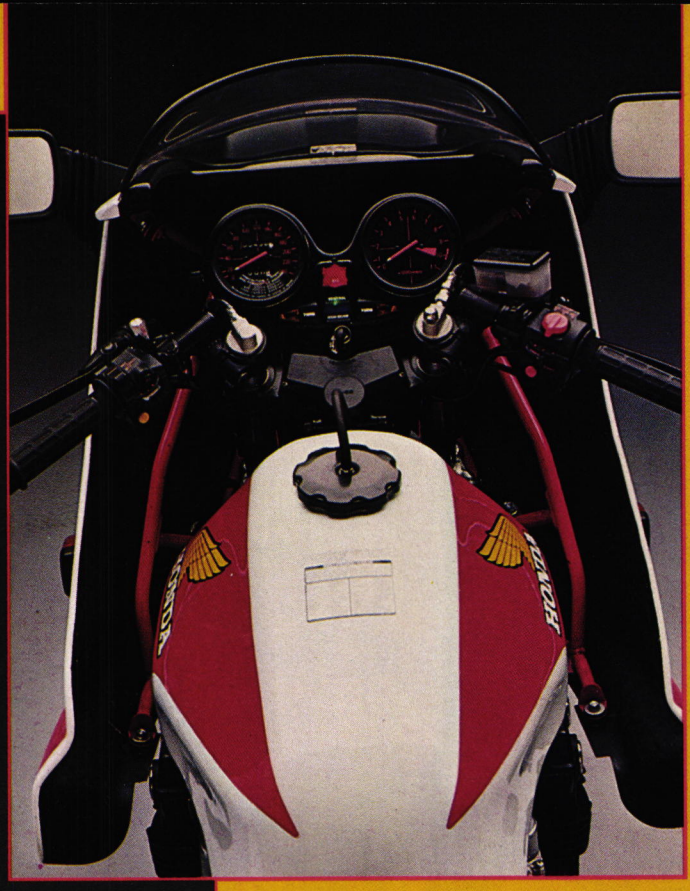

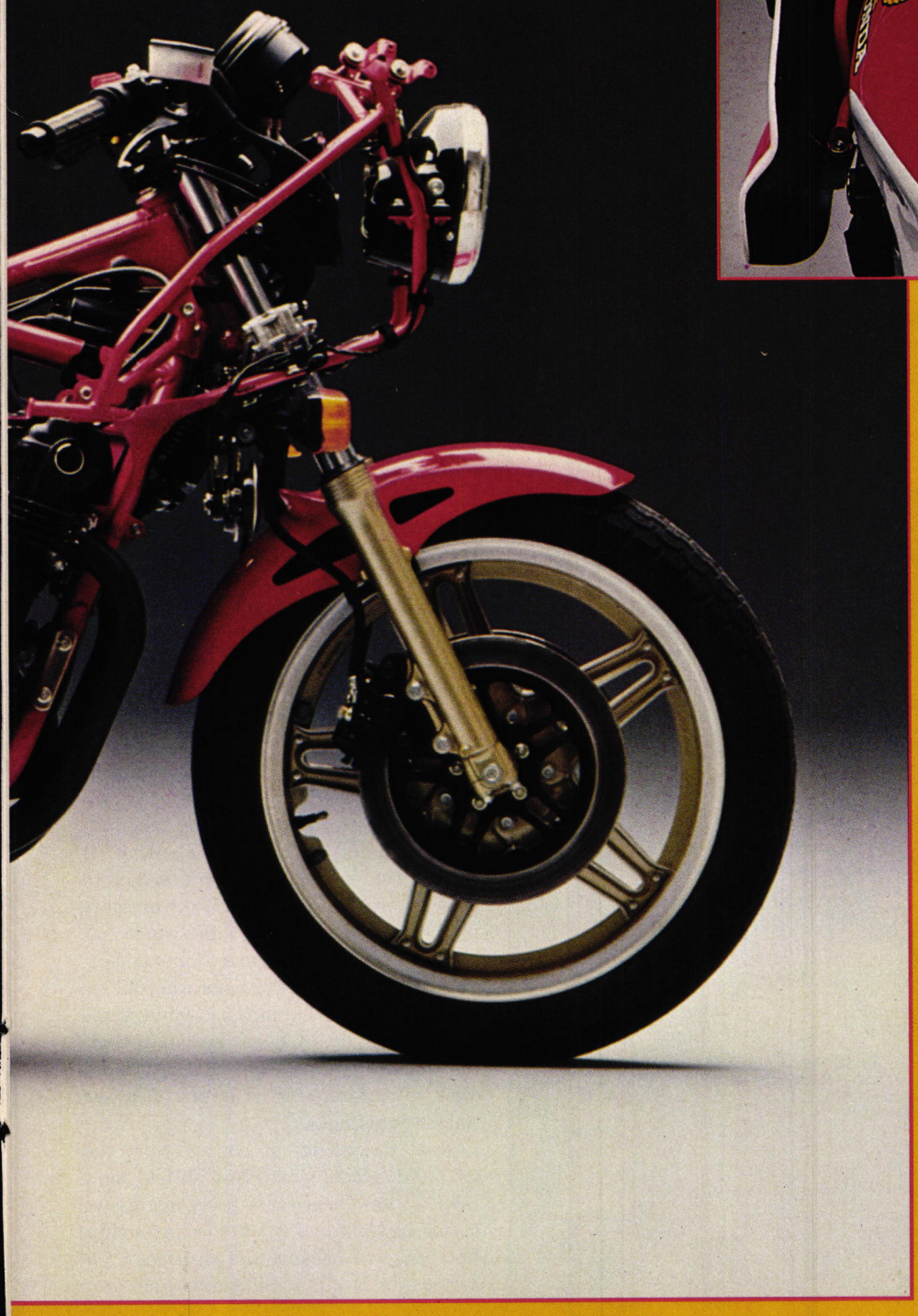

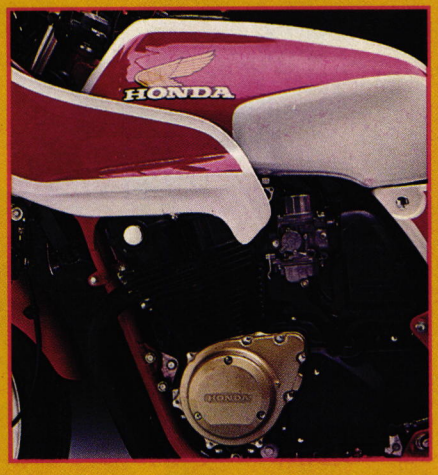

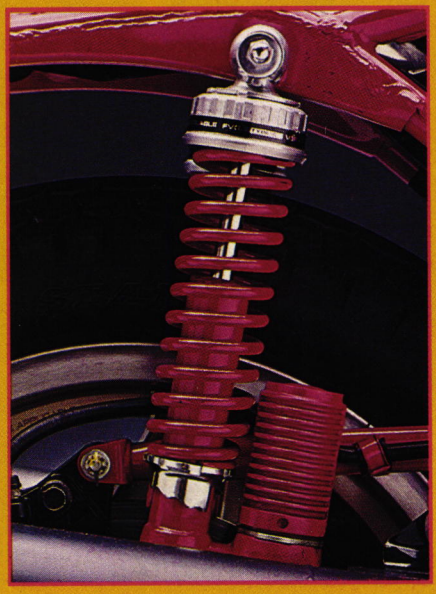

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footrests and no centerstand to contend with, it's a brave rider who will ever touch hardware to tarmac on an 1100R. I know that I didn't, and I can't remember the last time I was able to say that about a street-legal motorcycle.

What's more significant, though, is the ease and precision with which those extreme banking angles can be attained and maintained. But I hardly expected anything but sheer brilliance from a racing-oriented bike whose progenitor was the CB750F, a motorcycle that rewrote the book on four-cylinder handling. And although the 1100 does handle somewhat *differently* than either the 750 or 900 F-models, it's better-suited to its intended use as a WFO street/track racer.

For example, the 1100 shares the same basic 900F frame (but minus the removable rightside lower frame tube that permits easier engine R&R but could allow chassis flex during severe cornering) and 27.5-degree steering head angle, but it has 11mm more trail to enhance its high-speed stability. Conversely, the wheelbase is an inch shorter, presumably to insure that the lengthened trail doesn't make the 11R turn too lazily around lower-speed bends. Still, the combined effects of the longer trail, the narrow clip-on handlebars and the added weight on the front wheel (put there by the fiberglass fairing, the 6.9-gallon fuel capacity and the racing-crouch riding position) are that initiating a turn or flipping back and forth through a set of esses on the 1100 requires a bigger push on the bars than with an F-model.

Despite that, the CB-R always goes where you point it, willingly and accurately, and it retains its angle of lean without requiring pressure on one grip or the other. And it is that "neutral" feel, along with the stable precision of the steering and the abundance of cornering clearance, that makes the 1100R one of the most exhilarating horizon-tilters you're likely to encounter. You come away from a spirited back-road chase feeling like a real roadracer because . . . well, because you've been *riding* a real roadracer.

My sole complaint about the R's otherwise impeccable handling program is that pavement undulations or sudden throttle closures can induce a mild, low-frequency twitch if they occur during hard cornering. The symptoms never are severe enough to cause a loss of control; and they're minimized if the spring-preload and rebound-damping adjustments on the Showa FVQ reservoired shocks are both cranked up to their highest settings—and if the pressure in the air-assisted front fork (which has half an inch less travel and 2mm-smaller-diameter tubes than the American 900F) is at the 27-psi maximum. The twitch seems to be caused by a too-soft fork; and eliminating the condition altogether would seem to require a higher level of heavier-weight damping oil.

That fix would, of course, hurt the CB1100R's ride, which isn't so bad for a bike whose wheel rates favor aggressive cornering. At times it *felt* to ride harshly, but that was because the roadrace-style solo saddle is thinly padded and not par-

Continued

ticularly contoured to my nether regions. So an hour or more of straight-line superslab droning was literally a pain in the butt.

Any time I was doing what the bike was intended to do, though, it was surprisingly comfortable. Blitzing the backwoods roads of Oregon kept me moving around on the seat enough to stave off numbbutt, and I found all of the other contact points nicely configured to my six-foot-one needs. I could even scoot right up against the rear of the big aluminum gas tank and still be able to tuck my knees behind the fairing. And I appreciated the fact that the alloy clip-ons (which attach to the fork tubes *above* the top triple clamp rather than below it) have a clever provision for height and angle adjustments. They allowed me to position the bars just low enough to assume a comfortable racing crouch but just high enough to ward off the wristaches that roadracing ergonomics often induce.

The R's roadrace style fairing, too, is a joy to ride behind. It's a virtual clone of the CBX full-fairing—minus lowers, of course—that offers remarkable protection for its compactness and causes little turbulence around the rider's head. Due to its well-thought-out 10-point mounting system, it doesn't buzz, shudder or rattle the way most fairings of the genre do, and you can even tote along small bits of luggage (I carried a rolled-up rainsuit and a complete toiletries kit) behind the fairing by stuffing them between the tubes of the "birdcage" mounting frame and securing them with a bungie. And if that's not enough carrying capacity, you'll find an amazing amount of available storage in the lockable compartment molded into the tailpiece behind the solo seat.

That stowage is some consolation, I guess, for the fact that like it or not, a CB1100R pilot rides *alone*. Honda allegedly will equip the 1982 R-model with a dual seat, either as standard fare or as an

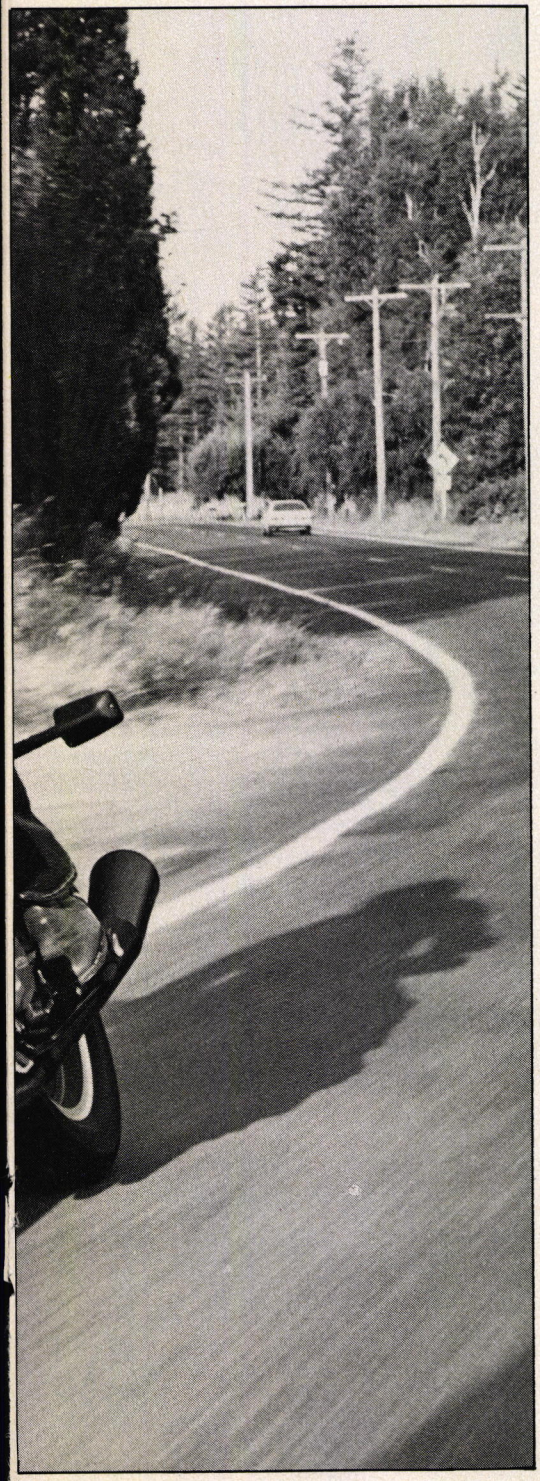
option, so those who don't care for strictly solo riding will have one less thing to complain about. And if the designers would make the rebound-damping adjusters on the shocks easier to reach and read (right now, they're out of sight, up inside the swoopy bodywork), *I'd* have less to gripe about.

Not that there's much fodder for discontent with the 1100R; it's so well-done, so spot-on, so outrageously competent that even *mentioning* its few minor shortcomings makes me feel like an overzealous nitpicker. The R is, granted, a much more narrow-focus motorcycle than the bikes it must compete against on the track and in the showroom. But within that narrow spectrum of ultimate sportbike performance, there is nothing—absolutely *nothing*—that can touch it.

That's why my only real complaint about the CB1100R is that *you* can't touch it.

heard over and over again why it has to be that way, but I have trouble remaining objective whenever I see people in other lands enjoying motorcycle delicacies that I'm told are off-limits. It's happened before, of course, and it'll happen again. But if the American riding populace feels as I do about the 1100R and kicks up enough fuss, maybe Honda will relent and bring a limited number of R-models into the country.

If that were to happen, it's conceivable—but improbable—that in the end, Honda might be sorry it gave in and imported the CB1100R. But take my word for it: Anyone who buys one won't. •



HONDA CB1100R

SPECIFICATIONS:

MANUFACTURER: Honda Motor Company, Ltd.
27-8, 6-chrome Jingu-mae
Shibuya-ku, 150 Japan

CATEGORY: street

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: NA

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	70.0mm x 69.0mm
Displacement	1062.1cc
Compression ratio	10.0:1
Carburetion	four 33mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Air filter	disposable paper element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	electric only
Ignition	magneto CDI
Charging system	12-volt; alternator, voltage regulator, rectifier

DRIVETRAIN

Clutch	wet, multi-plate
Crankshaft-to-jackshaft	Hy-vo type chain; 1.000:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-transmission	straight-cut gears; 2.041:1 ratio
Final drive	#530 chain (5/8-in. pitch, 3/8-in width); 2.353:1 (17/40) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.533	12.171	6.4
II	1.789	8.596	9.1
III	1.391	6.683	11.7
IV	1.160	5.573	14.1
V	1.000	4.805	16.3

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	air-spring, 37mm stanchion tube diameter/ 5.5 in. (140mm)
Rear	5-way adjustable spring preload, 2-way adjustable compression damping, 3-way adjustable rebound damping/4.3 in. (110mm)

BRAKES

Front	dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 11.6-in. (295mm) disc
Rear	single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.6-in. (295mm) disc

TIRES

Front	3.50V19 Dunlop Gold Seal F11
Rear	130/90V18 Dunlop Gold Seal K127

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	518 lbs. (235kg)
Wheelbase	58.2 to 59.5 in. (1478 1511mm)
Seat height	32.0 in. (813mm)
Handlebar width	adjustable from 23.2 in. (589mm) to 27.5 in. (698mm)
Footpeg height	15.4 in. (391mm)
Ground clearance	7.1 in. (180mm), at exhaust clamps
Steering head angle	27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.76 in. (121mm)
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity	3.7 qt. (3.5/)
Fuel tank	aluminum, 6.9 gal. (26.0/), including 1.2 gal. (4.5/) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption	31 to 48 mpg (13 to 20 km/l)
Range, maximum	214 to 331 miles (344 to 533 km)
Range, reserve only	37 to 58 miles (60 to 93 km)
Top speed (calculated)	155 mph (249 kph)

WARRANTY: 12 month unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: red with white only

SUZUKI.
PERFORMANCE ABOVE ALL

GS-650GL

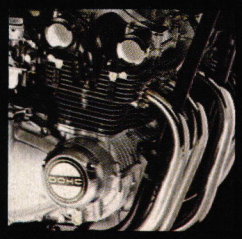
Whether you're into riding light-to-light or town-to-town, think seriously about the 1982 GS-650GL.

Consider the powerful DOHC 4-stroke Twin Dome Combustion Chamber engine with Suzuki shaft drive. And a suspension that includes leading axle front air forks and a tapered roller bearing suspended swing arm.

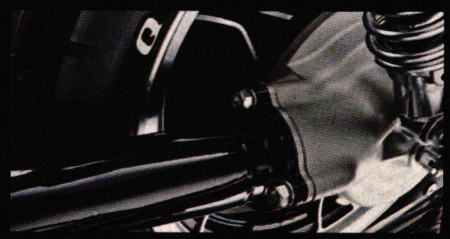
Now, consider the extra touches: Like new instrumentation, raised white letter tires, fingertip choke lever, plus Suzuki's endless list of standard features.

Admit it. The 1982 GS-650GL is one cruise you must take.

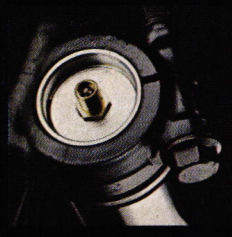
Twin Dome Combustion Chamber engine: Built for incredible performance and impressive fuel efficiency.



Suzuki shaft drive: Without a doubt the smoothest, most lash-free shaft drive available.



Front air forks: Provide better handling and ride under all conditions.



UNLIMITED 12 MONTHS MILEAGE

You can't get a better warranty from any other motorcycle company. But then you can't get a better streetbike than a Suzuki. Offered only in the 48 contiguous United States and Alaska. Refer to U.S. Suzuki GS, GN Model "Limited Warranty Policy" at Suzuki dealerships. A similar warranty is offered in Canada.

SUZUKI®

BMW R80 G/S

Riding to the beat of a different Beemer.

BY TED WEST

The man who buys a BMW R80 G/S because it's "exactly the bike for his needs" is one of three things. He's a case-hardened all-terrain cross-continent map-buster, or he's a canny dual-purpose rider . . . or he's an unmitigated fool.

Consider for a moment what the R80 G/S body language says. It's some kind of dirt bike—one look at the shoulder-height front fork makes that clear. Same with the 21-inch front wheel, the MX-style plastic front fender, the belly-mounted bash plate, the shark-tooth pegs, the Metzeler trials-universal tires. All still clear.

But look closer and things start getting wonky. First, there's a great hulking 800cc boxer engine suspended inside—*and outside*—the engine bay. And on the front axle is a 10.2-inch *disc brake,* hydraulic, no less. Stand next to this BMW "dirt bike" and things get even stranger. Seen in pictures, the G/S could be any size at all—maybe they just stood a midget next to it for photography—but in real life there are no excuses left. The G/S isn't merely tall, it's thick, lumpy, massive. Struggle its hefty 405 pounds forward off the centerstand and you know beyond all doubt. If this was meant to be a serious dirt bike, Mighty Joe Young was meant to ride it.

But this is a Beemer, after all. Perhaps beneath its gawky mock-dirt appearance lies yet another superb road machine.

A press of the starter button leads to a ride around the block, during which the G/S feels pretty good. After all, it might be lard-butt heavy for dirt, but by any and all modern street standards, this is one lean machine. And the sheer wheel travel afforded by the dirt-style suspension soaks up bad pavement and potholes like God's Own Household Sponge. Combine this with the G/S's pleasingly quick steering—thanks, again, to its quasi-dirt specs—and you have a marvelous around-town errand-hopper.

Surely, though, BMW hasn't produced a $4800 dual-purpose bike solely to get you from the North Side to the South Side via the shortcut dirt path through the City Dump. No indeed. In fact, despite first appearances, confusing, impractical and limited as they seem, the R80 G/S is one of the

most ruthlessly practical and *un*-limited motorcycles we've ever run across. To understand why, though, we have to start at the beginning.

It's easy for American riders to forget what the Real World is made of. We've come to believe that all motorcycling falls into two distinct categories—flawless pavement and lawless dirt. Oh sure, there are still some riders who believe dual-purpose bikes aren't a complete waste of Green Stamps. In normal American dirt vs. street riding, however, dual-purpose bikes too often prove to be unsatisfactory compromises on *both* surfaces.

But don't be too smug, purist. There are roads in the world where dual-purpose riders have it nailed. Roads where your dirt bike isn't allowed and two minutes on your street bike is like living in poison oak underwear. Roads thousands of miles long where you encounter every imaginable surface, from smooth pavement, to frost-heaves, to ankle-deep dust, hip-deep potholes, pea gravel, walnut gravel, baseball gravel, mud, slime, slurry the consistency of hot peanut butter . . .

Not to beat around the bush, we rode the R80 G/S over the archetypal dual-purpose testing ground—from Los Angeles up the Alaska Highway (above described) to Anchorage and back. After 6000 miles, the point was indisputable—for all-terrain touring no bike anywhere in the world compares with the R80 G/S. Period.

In fact, if there's a difficulty about the G/S, it isn't with the bike itself, but with the sheer unconventionality of its mission. To begin, even by dual-purpose standards, the G/S breaks the mold. Unlike all but one other d-p bike (the Moto-Morini Camel), this Beemer is descended from street stock. A short blast up a twisty paved canyon—not to mention an *un*-paved one—will make the point. No matter how loudly its appearance clammers to the contrary, the G/S is more or less traditional Beemer fun on tarmac. Its hearty 800cc twin throbs with robust low- and midrange torque, and those odd Metzeler trials-universal tires hang on like an ugly sister at the beach.

The tires, incidentally, are worthy of special mention. Metzeler spent an entire year developing them specifically to provide this motorcycle with dual-purpose rubber speed-rated at over 100 mph, since existing trials-universal tires were all non-rated. And hustling these little pentagonal knobbies over the tarmac at speed demonstrates that the year wasn't wasted.

The G/S's front disc instantly justifies itself on pavement, of course. It won't pull the dental work out of your head at full-stop—but then, if it did, it would be outright hazardous on the dirt. Compromises of this sort are essential on dual-purpose bikes, but for the G/S's projected uses, the disc is ideal. On a motocross course a drum brake might be well and good, but in conditions encountered on the Alaska Highway there would've been whole weeks when a drum brake was just sodden, ineffectual dead weight. The disc, on the other hand, in all conditions, was always there.

Another example of the inevitable dual-purpose compromise is the G/S's riding position. Clearly, without fitting dual sets of foot controls, there is no way to keep a rider comfortably leaned down on the Interstate, then securely upright horsing the G/S through the dirt. And equally clearly, there is *no* way to horse this bike through mud and slime lying down. Inevitably, therefore, the G/S was given the upright dirt-riding position. Rightly so.

However, hustling up the aforesaid twisty canyon road you'll feel distressingly flat-footed and up-in-the-wind on the G/S, somewhat in the mold of the legendary Cushman scooter. And blasting down the Interstate at 75 hour after hour, you'll take the worst battering since Leon Spinks met Spiderman. Consequently, the passenger pegs do frequent duty as freeway pegs.

The minute you take the G/S onto dirt, though, you begin to understand the essence of compromise. Not to put too fine a point on it, the G/S is only marginally competent in rough stuff. Dependable, yes. Sure-footed, yes. But awesomely caution-inspiring as well. Bite from the Metzelers in dirt can best be described as "present."

And in muck or deep dust the tire's narrow profile, combined with the G/S's massive weight, digs to the bottom of things in a hurry. In this kind of riding, sitting well back on the G/S's saddle is critically important. Oh, yes—and riding *so very* gently.

But don't misunderstand: This bike will whip *any* street bike in the muck, and it'll take you just about any place you'd sanely want to go, pavement or dirt. In fact, that's the point. The R80 is neither berm-buster nor café-racer, it's far simpler than that—perhaps far simpler than we over-specialized modern riders are prepared to accept. The R80 G/S is one thing alone, a Get-There Bike. It'll go nearly anywhere in relative safety and comfort, and the tougher and more varied the route, the more the G/S likes it.

Accordingly, BMW has worked hard to keep things simple on this bike. The heart of the G/S, of course, is the bog-standard,

Continued

marvelously dependable overhead-valve twin chuffer. As with all other BMWs for 1981, the G/S is supplied with new, lighter cylinders. Thanks to BMW's Nickisil process, steel bore-liners have been eliminated and the aluminum cylinder walls impregnated, instead, with a nickel-moly-silicone coating for hardness. This not only saves weight, but improves heat-dissipation, reduces friction and allows for closer tolerances. Thus, BMW's traditionally generous oil consumption has been reduced. The sole penalty for all this savory goodness is that worn cylinders cannot be re-bored—unless, of course, you have iron sleeves inserted.

Flywheel weight has also been reduced in all 1981 BMWs, and for the G/S this results in mightily useful engine response. The BMW engineers have achieved an excellent balance of bark-to-bite for the G/S, even on the dirt. The bike's power curve is neither skittish nor sluggish off-road, and on pavement the torquey flat-twin is, as we've said, plain delicious. Furthermore, if you've loaded the kitchen sink for your round-the-world ride, the engine will just tuk-a-tuk-a onward without protest, no slipping the clutch, no closing the eyes.

And as you work the clutch, you'll find that the G/S's clutch action is dramatically lighter than on previous BMWs. This is particularly welcome for long-distance dirt touring and promises that in the near future, compulsive left-handers will be able to shake hands with Beemer owners without suffering crushed knuckles.

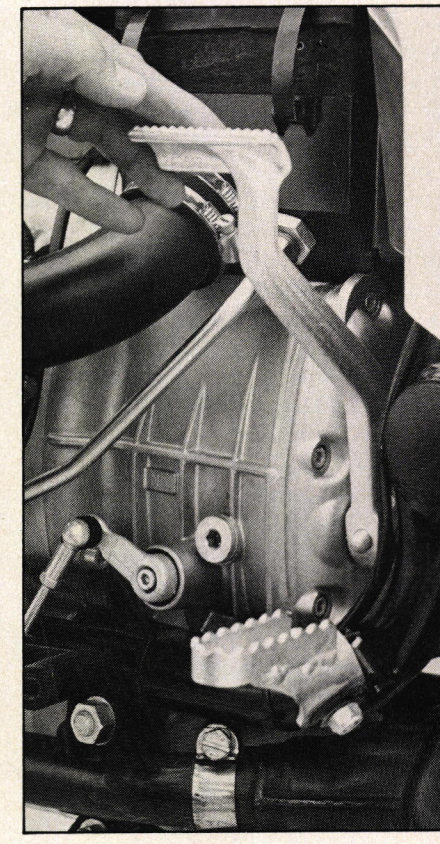
Unfortunately, the same can not be said for the G/S's Magura-controlled throttle. From the beginning, even after a thorough cleaning, the throttle was stiff and slow to return. Fortunately, our test bike had BMW's/optional throttle-drag set-screw mounted to it, and so after a few days it was set at medium-gooey and left there for the rest of the trip. The mere thought of a cruise control on a dirt bike emphasizes the BMW's uniqueness.

That one-of-a-kind nature carries over to the frame, which is all but identical to the street-only R65's at the front. But as you work back to the left rear, strange things appear—or more properly, *dis*appear. Like, for instance, the entire rear suspension. From the left side all you see is a wheel and tire hanging out in mid-air—it's as if someone were making a sketch and simply forgot to draw in the left half of the swingarm and the left-side lay-down Boge shock. It was no mistake. Ever priding itself on iconoclasm, BMW built a "mono-shock" like that on no other full-size bike. The result is the R80 G/S's "Monolever." It not only comprises the entire rear suspension for the G/S, it includes the driveshaft as well.

The original motive for this innovation, of course, was weight reduction. Shafties tend to be a little arse-heavy, after all, particularly in the matter of unsprung weight, so eliminating almost half of a normal rear

Across a continent and back in three weeks

Learning to speak Beemish in two countries.



BMW reinvents the kickstarter

Backwoods dead-battery insurance.

Any-rpm horsepower allows the BMW to attack dual-purpose riding without a tach

And the dash suggests that a picture is worth a thousand idiot lights.

suspension's components seems an effective way to cure the problem. But to do so without making the bike handle like a snake, BMW had to build a single-leg swingarm that would, through increased tube diameters, wall thicknesses and buttresses, be *extremely* rigid and trustworthy. Still, as mightily beefed-up as the R80's arm is, its heft is not negatively reflected in the handling or ride, since much of the reinforcement is close to the pivot end of the arm where it has minimal effect on unsprung weight. And BMW claims the heavily-reinforced swingarm offers torsional rigidity 30 percent *greater* than its conventional twin-arm suspension with only slightly more than half the weight. Riding the G/S further bears this out. No matter how fast you're traveling, there is not a hint of flex in the rear of the bike. And after a couple of thousand miles you get to believing that even without crossing your fingers.

In the context of the Get-There Bike, this Monolever suspension offers yet another bonus—the easiest rear tire repairs in the history of motorcycling. If you're simply replacing a tube, you needn't even remove the wheel. And if the wheel must come off, it's a simple matter of removing three lug-nuts on the left side and sliding the wheel off the hub.

If the bike has one major disappointing feature, it is the gearbox. Like most BMWs, the R80 G/S is chock full of neutrals. No matter how carefully or forcefully you shift, you're likely to find a new neutral when you least expect it. The transmission also has a peculiar—and in the case of fourth-to-fifth shifts on our test bike, angering—two-count action.The result is one notchy, stiff item. Granted, thanks to reduced flywheel inertia, the time-honored BMW klunk has been much-reduced, but still, you can feel the shifter come out of the lower gear, take a stubborn breath, then make a run at the next gear . . . unless, of course, you find another phantom neutral instead. And on our bike, shifting from fourth to fifth was accomplished with two separate pumps of the toe, the latter usually with the clutch only half-engaged, otherwise, the result was little more than peg-wear on the top of a left riding boot.

The G/S's styling raised eyebrows as well. First, of course, there was the dayglo-orange saddle, which elicited several comments sufficiently rude to get you thrown out of a Singapore House of Pleasure. And the bike's individual cosmetics seemed to contradict its tough, utilitarian, the-hell-I-can't image. The white paint was fine, as it simply *refused* to look dirty, but the two-color decals on the tank were halfway worn off after only a week's riding.

As for the aforementioned dayglo-orange seat, there have been howls of discontent on the subject from various other (hind-) quarters. Fine. After 6000-plus mies in just under three weeks on this saddle, I say horse-dip! For all of its unconven-

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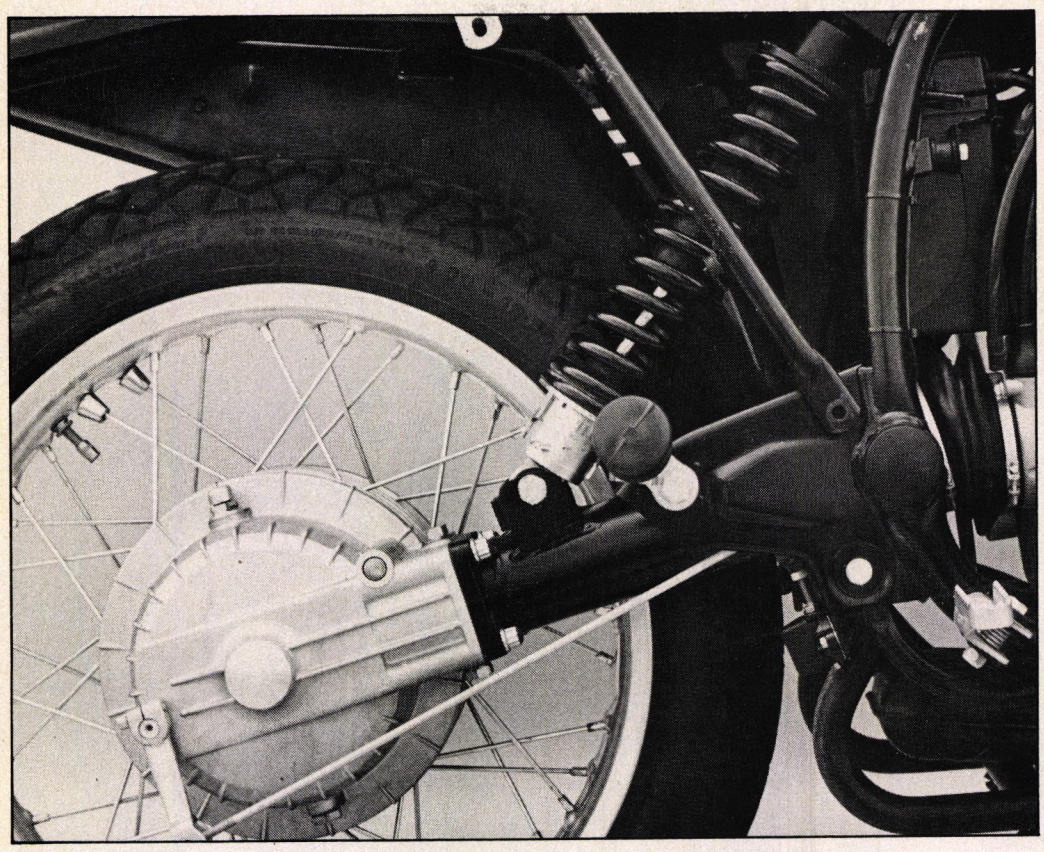
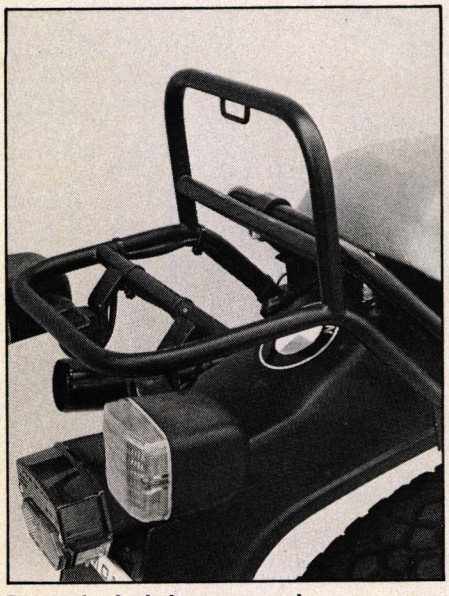


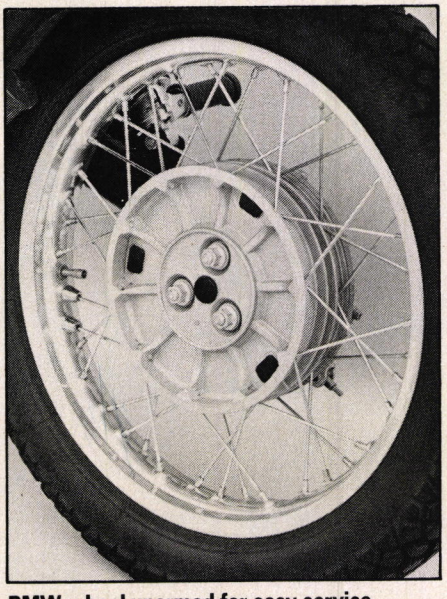
Monolever suspension is the Bavarian answer to the dirt-world's current one-shock craze

Drive shaft/swingarm combination teams up the cantilevered shock for 7.8 inches of travel.



Down-sized tubular cargo-carrier

For down-sized loads on short hauls.



BMW wheel unarmed for easy service

Wheel removal is three lugs away.

tional orangeness—doubtless, to attract Air Search & Rescue teams and polar bears when you've gone down in the Arctic—this seat is one of *the* most comfortable rides I've ever straddled. Day after day, map quadrant after map quadrant, it just kept on saying, "I'm okay, you're okay." Even the dirt-wide handlebar, which might have caused discomfort over the long haul, somehow managed to be comfortable in fast pavement riding—especially, I should add, when the rider stretched out, feet on buddy pegs. The G/S did exhibit moderate vibration and a slight handlebar-wobble at really high speed on pavement, but in comparison to wobble on other dual-purpose bikes, it was safely ignored.

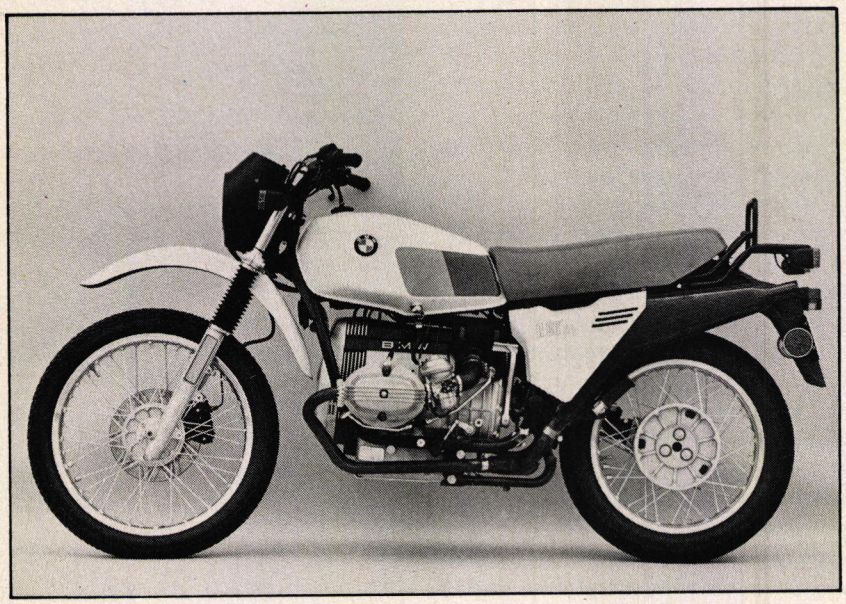
One word of caution, though. Our test bike was fitted only with the standard equipment centerstand; and if you're planning to do much riding off-road, it is wholly inadequate. An optional BMW sidestand is available, and it ought to be on your "must have" list. A final caveat is that for serious long-distance out-backing, the G/S' seemingly enormous 5.1-gallon steel fuel tank is not nearly as generous as it appears. In there's-a-cop-back-there Interstate riding we got as much as 51 mpg, but on the dirt and when things got rough,

the bike's mileage plummeted to a disappointing 41 mpg . . . and hard as it may be for you purists to believe, there are roads in the world where you can go more than 25 miles without a gas station.

All in all, though, the R80 G/S is a superb unit. If you live or ride where very long, very choppy roads are the rule, this is the bike you've been waiting for. Or if you do most of your riding on pavement, but want to take the occasional weekend plunk-plunk up the dirt-side of a local hill—and are certain you won't get angry when a real dirt bike passes you halfway to the top—this is the bike you've been waiting for.

But if this *is* the bike you're waiting for, you don't need us to tell you so. Very simply, nothing else will come even close and you'll recognize it right away. And after riding to Alaska and back on the R80 G/S. all we can do is envy you. . . . •

BMW R80 G/S



SPECIFICATIONS:

IMPORTER: BMW of North America, Inc.
Walnut and Hudson Streets
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

CATEGORY: dual-purpose

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4800

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke horizontally opposed twin
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	84.8mm x 70.6mm
Displacement	797.5cc
Compression ratio	8.2:1
Carburetion	two 32mm Bing constant-vacuum
Air filter	disposable paper element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	electric and kick in neutral
Ignition	transistorized breakerless, single coil
Charging system	12-volt; alternator, voltage regulator, rectifier

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive	helical gears; 1.500:1 ratio
Clutch	dry, single-plate
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel	spiral-bevel gears; 3.360:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.933	14.782	5.3
II	1.907	9.611	8.2
III	1.380	6.955	11.3
IV	1.113	5.610	14.0
V	1.000	5.040	15.6

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	36mm stanchion tube diameter/6.8 in (173mm)
Rear	3-way adjustable spring preload/7.8 in. (198mm)

BRAKES

Front	double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.2-in. (260mm) disc
Rear	drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES

Front	3.00-21 48R Metzeler Enduro
Rear	4.00-18 64R Metzeler Enduro

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	405 lbs. (186kg)
Weight distribution	45.7% front, 54.3% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)	877 lbs. (398kg)
Wheelbase	57.3 in. (1455mm)
Seat height	33.8 in. (859mm)
Handlebar width	32.3 in. (820mm)
Footpeg height	14.0 in. (356mm)
Ground clearance	8.0 in. (203mm), at engine sump
Steering head angle	27.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.74 in. (95mm)
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity	2.4 qt. (2.3/)
Fuel tank	steel, 4.6 gal. (17.5/), including 0.5 gal. (2.0/) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption	36 to 54 mpg (15 to 23 km/l)
Range, maximum	166 to 248 miles (267 to 399km)
Range, reserve only	18 to 27 miles (29 to 43km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated	30 mph actual
Best ¼-mile acceleration	14.069 sec., 92.30 mph (149kph)
Top speed (calculated)	105 mph (169kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph	NA
Stopping distance from 60 mph	NA

WARRANTY: one year unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: white only

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty

Ride Review

• I cannot tell a lie: Overall, I neither like nor understand the R80 G/S. I just can't seem to find any slot in the motorcycle market into which the bike logically and comfortably fits. And besides, I don't know of anyone who's looking for a 400-pound, $5000 dual-purpose bike that's only marginal in the dirt.

Something that the BeeEm does extraordinarily well, though, is handle with remarkable ease and aplomb on paved backroads, especially those wickedly rough and twisty ones. Which is why I think BMW ought to forget the bike's off-road aspirations and concentrate on making it a street-only sportbike. Because with its light weight, long suspension, quick steering and ease of handling, it could be one of the most enjoyable canyon racers ever—one, in fact, that I'm almost tempted to build myself —*Paul Dean*

• Understanding my affection for the G/S requires an admission: As a kid, I hung around Abercrombie & Fitch, eyeing the elephant guns and daydreaming about expeditions. No great revelation, but it shows why I don't have the trouble some riders do in dealing with the G/S. I'm prepared, down to my chukkas, to accept the BMW on its own terms. Here is a motorcycle that looks better smeared with mud than shiny, because it speaks of the outback. Better with nicks in the finish because they just *couldn't* have come from a trip as mundane as to the store.

All that apparent worldliness would be nothing more than a cheap trick if the machinery didn't back it up—and this Beemer is neither cheap nor a trick. Beneath the Edmund Hilary looks lies a motorcycle uniquely suited to its task. If you accept the task, you accept the bike.

—*Larry Works*

• Like a ride on a NASA centrifuge, the R80 G/S has upset my system so much I'm a little confused. I climbed on thinking it was going to be fun to ride, but the single-shock BMW did so many unpleasant things to my body that I was glad to pull out of the test program.

Every part of me suffered at some point. My hands tingled on vibrating, hard grips and my feet hummed from vibration through the all-steel pegs. And after an hour in the saddle I had terminal numbbutt. Even my shoulders didn't escape because BMW's once plush fork is far too harsh to ride smoothly on the street. And yet for all its dirt-riding compromises, the R80 G/S is not a trail bike. It might work fine on a 1000-mile trek across the Sahara, but on anything else it's just an uncomfortable street bike.

—*David Dewhurst.*

TRAIL TEST:

Honda XR500R

Honda redefines the Thumper.

BY RON LAWSON

Honda's XR500R is a victim of unrealistic expectations. It arrived bristling with the armaments of a new age, its features and styling boldly stating that this, at last, is a serious machine for serious riders. But beneath the raceresque promise, the XR lets its playbike bloodline show through, dropping hints that looks can sometimes deceive.

Until now, four-strokes have occupied a sedate role in the dirt bike market as weekend playthings, not to be confused with real enduro bikes. The latest and most elaborate tricks were reserved for motocrossers and Six-Day machines, while the quadrastrokers thumped along merrily using yesterday's designs and concepts. Their mellow power characteristics were so well suited for play that it seemed pointless to build a four-stroke enduro bike. But all that is changing. Up-to-the-minute technology rips the XR out of its playbike mold and drops it into a whole new category where no motorcycle has laid tracks before. Honda has made the XR into *the* four-stroke enduro bike, and in doing so, placed quite a burden on its pegs. It would have been easy enough to remain in the family-fun arena, ruling over picnic areas and camping grounds. But with its new identity, the Honda is now up against stiffer competition and gnarlier terrain.

Some aspects of the XR meet the challenge with flying colors. Its Pro-Link rear suspension, around which the bike's redirection is centered, smoothly soaks up bumps and ripples as well as any full-blown enduro bike. As with Honda's 1982 motocrossers, the single Showa shock features a new valving system that provides increased rebound damping in all four of its settings, and is mechanically linked to the swingarm for a rising rate of damping and springing. The initial inches of wheel travel are plusher than any other enduro bike on the market and yet the stiffer final few inches of travel prevent bottoming even on a rough motocross track. This year's shock valving has been improved slightly with a flexible disc replacing last year's sliding valve to reduce friction and heat build-up that would weaken even the new upgraded oil. The shock's only visible change is the finless aluminum reservoir. We ran our XR with the preload setting backed almost all the way off and had satisfying results on a great variety of trails. At this time, Honda doesn't offer replacement parts for the shock, but rebuild kits could be offered later in the year. Also on the list of parts that could be available soon are differing spring rates. With or without these extras, the Pro-Link still rates at the top of the enduro-suspension heap.

It's the same story up front. The fork action never produced a single complaint. The XR's springs are heavier than last year's and the suggested air pressure is now zero, in keeping with the current consensus on state-of-the-art suspension setup. Air caps are still provided, of course, but are as much a sales feature as a means of fine tuning the fork for specific types of riding. In line with Honda's recommendations, we found zero air pressure resulted in the best fork action. The stock spring rate was just right for most riders and no more than a couple of pounds of air pressure should allow the fork to suit *anyone*.

Both front and rear suspension on the

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 DAVID DEWHURST

XR perform so well that the machine actually begins to exceed its promise of being a no-nonsense woods weapon. The first hint that perhaps the XR owes allegiance to its playbike heritage is evident when it hits narrow, winding trails. Steering on the XR is very quick, almost skittish. It constantly reminds its rider to stay wide awake, ready to compensate and then recompensate for anything. The best enduro bikes, on the other hand, are somehow able to fade into the background on a demanding trail, allowing the rider to concentrate only on the terrain ahead. But the XR demands constant attention. It must always come first; the trail is assigned a secondary role. That feeling never quite goes away, even at the end of a long day of riding. The awareness that the XR is between you and the trail is due in part to the bike's quick handling and its inescapable 289-pound weight, but also to the odd riding position. Tall riders feel especially out of place on the Honda because of the placement of the footpegs, which are slightly high and far-forward relative to the seat. The rider finds himself in a semi-reclined position, making it difficult to weight the front wheel during tight maneuvering.

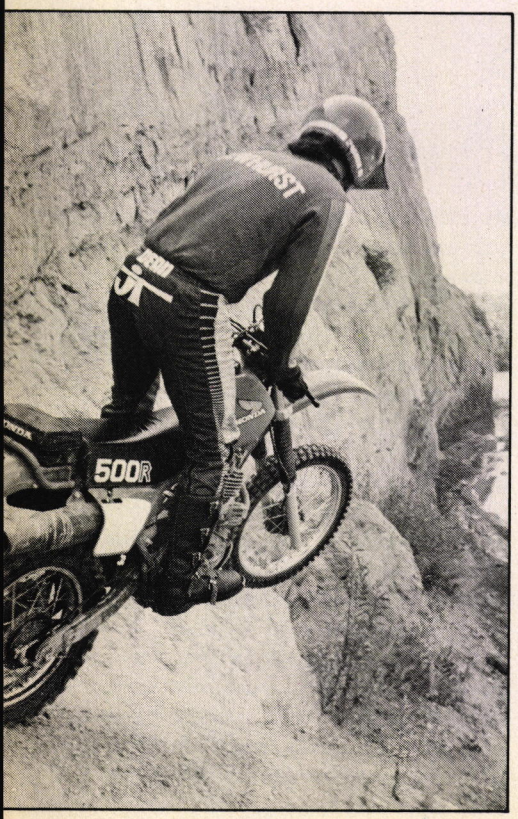
But the biggest hindrance in the bike's layout is the positioning of the handlebar. It is simply too wide, giving unneeded leverage to the already fast-handling machine. From the saddle of the XR you have to reach up as well as out to grab on. The bar isn't unusually tall, but the top of the steering crown is. This might be a throwback to the days of the 23-inch front wheel when more clearance was required between fender and tire, but whatever the reason, it creates another problem in managing rough, tight trails. The rider's arms are placed in such a position that it requires extra effort and the use of strange muscles to pull forward and stand up on the pegs. And once up, an awkward, cramped arm position must be maintained in order to remain standing. The predictable result is a lazy riding style. Instead of attacking the trail from above in classic enduro form, the Honda pilot soon begins to sit through all but the worst sections in an effort to save energy. This isn't a problem on broad trails or fireroads, but when it comes to the more challenging terrain typical of most enduro courses, an XR rider can get worn down very quickly.

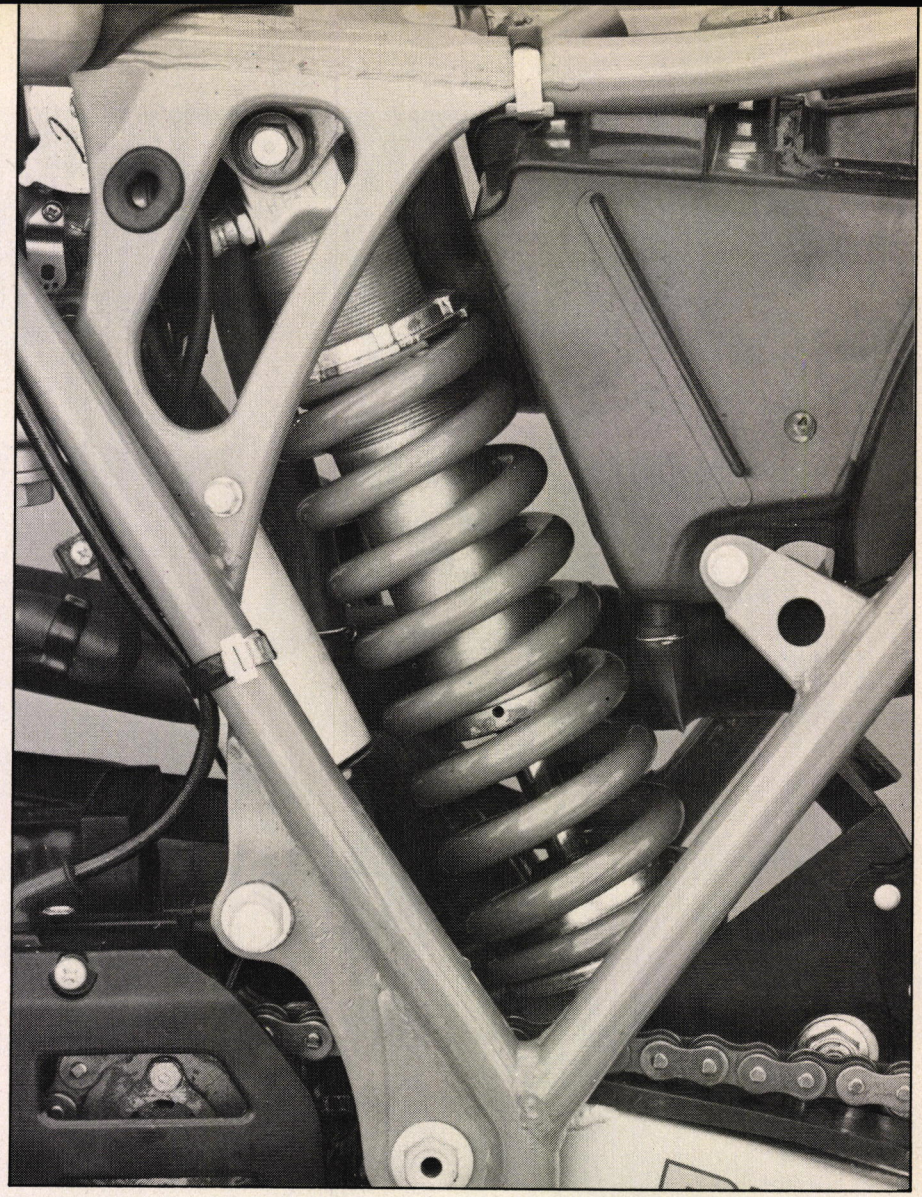
The first water crossing uncovers another clue to the XR's true preferences. In spite of a new labyrinth seal design, both front and rear brakes cease to function as soon as they see water. And even once it dries out, the front doesn't offer the

Continued

smooth, progressive feel that we have come to expect in double-leading-shoe brakes. One-finger pressure on the lever does very little, but when an extra helping of panic-squeeze is put to use, the rider is suddenly faced with a locked front wheel. In back, the stopping power is strong, even though the cable produces a spongy feel. The brake lever's folding tip turned out to be nothing more than a nonfunctional sales-department-designed product. We know, because we bent the lever in our first fall. When folded, the tip's hinge protrudes nearly as far as the tip itself.

The Honda's third brake is, as with most thumpers, its engine. Roll off the throttle and leave the brake levers alone; the 498cc mill will soon drag you down from speed. Engine braking perhaps isn't as pronounced as it traditionally is on big four-stroke singles, but it's still there and strong enough to catch an unwary two-stroke rider by surprise. The engine itself is basically the same overhead-cam, four-valve single that was equipped on the '79 XR. But there is one major difference: Starting with 1981, the XR is fitted with a reed valve in the intake port aimed at increasing low-end response. The idea of adapting this aspect of two-stroke technology to a thumper isn't new to Honda; the firm originally experimented with the idea in Europe several years ago on the factory trials bikes. Then when the U.S. enduro team began to detune the XRs to make them more manageable in tight situations,





The Showa shock receives new valving and an aluminum reservoir for '82

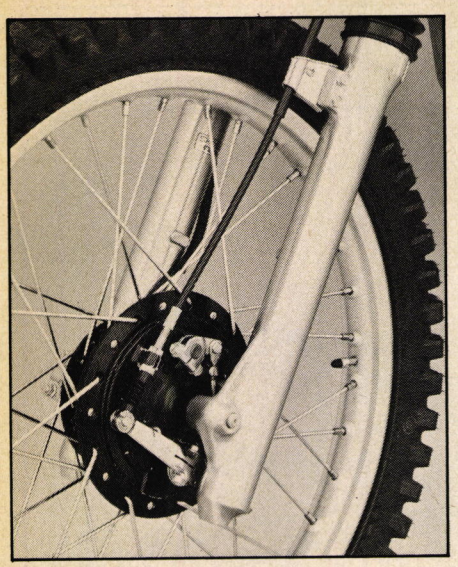
A serious enduro tool wrapped in a playbike package.

Honda dug into its bag of old tricks and came up with the reed. The six-petal unit differs from those found in Honda two-strokes first in that the petals are of a flat-steel, rather than a grid-pattern, design. And the XR doesn't use slotted reed stops as do the CRs. The reed offers more response at low engine speeds where most four-strokes cough and die from sudden handfuls of throttle. The reed lets the XR inhale only as much as it needs and it also reduces backfiring. The cost that the reed extracts is a reduction in top-end power because of a restriction in flow, but the XR's trailability doesn't suffer as a result. Its horses are spread smoothly and predictably over a flat curve and its versatility is unmatched in two-stroke circles.

Another imaginative feature of the XR's powerplant is an automatic compression release. As soon as the kickstarter is depressed, the release is opened for easier starting. And a manual control is mounted on the handlebar to open the valve fractionally more for total relief of engine compression. Easy starts are common on the XR whether hot or cold. It started surprisingly easy, in fact, especially when compared to an Open-class motocrosser, such as the RM465. When the XR did occasionally kick back, it was never with the broken-foot severity of thumper fame.

The front portions of all Honda's XR engines have a unique look due to the double-port exhaust. Honda claims that better cooling results because of less heat concentration. The powerplant exhales through twin pipes that twist back to a single muffler/spark arrester unit. Honda drops a bolt-on baffle into every XR crate which keeps the exhaust bark down to a mild California-mandated woof, but steals a little more power.

In the small parts and set-up department, Honda has done its homework. The wheels in particular have received more than their share of careful enduro-thought, as witnessed by the snail-type chain ad-



The XR's new fork, rim and spokes

The changes are for wheel.

Charting the Changes

Engine: The motor is unchanged from last year's original R-model design.

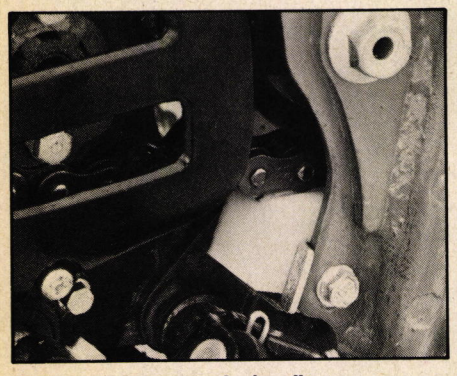
Chassis: Dimensions and materials are identical to the 1980 model.

Suspension: Stanchion tube wall thickness is reduced so that each tube is 300 grams lighter than last year's. Damping oil quantity is improved. Rebound damping force is increased 6 percent. Fork spring rate is also upped, but by 7 percent. An all-new rear shock does away with last year's dual-stage sliding-valve damping system and uses flexible discs that are claimed to reduce heat build-up. Shock rebound damping is increased 7 percent and provides a more gradual damping curve. Compression damping is decreased 6 percent. A lighter shock reservoir no longer has cooling fins.

Details: The multi-piece tool now has a built-in spoke wrench. A fixed nylon rubbing block increases chain life. Recalibration of the speedometer increases accuracy and a breather tube prevents internal fogging. Stronger rim material allows a reduction in thickness and saves 200 grams in each wheel. A patented rim lock has rubber buttons on its upper surface to prevent spoke nipples from loosening. Both brakes have redesigned labyrinth seals to reduce the ingress of water, and the front hub is laced with stronger spokes. The swingarm pivot bolt is made from stronger steel, and removal of paint from the bottom shock mounting prevents the bolt from loosening in service. White number plates and new graphics on the tank and seat distinguish the 1982 XR500R.

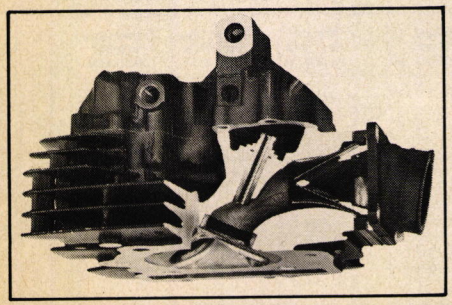
justers and the easily-removed rear wheel. Up front, the spokes are of a heavier gauge than last year's and both ends have stronger rims. Through the course of our test, both wheels remained true even though the spokes loosened in their initial seating-in period. The rimlocks are also of a new design with small rubber protrusions that prevent the common loose-spoke-on-each-side-of-the-lock syndrome. But the rear tire is the target of easy slander. After only one and a half days of riding it was gone. It wore out so quickly we weren't able to tell if it was ever any good. The IRC, in spite of the 5.10-17 dimensions labeled on its side, is a narrow tire to start with, and a soft rubber compound and a heavy motorcycle both contribute to rapid tire wear. No matter what kind of tire lives on the hind-end, XRs are quickly developing a reputation for having an appetite for rubber.

The tire gripe falls into the same category as the problems with brakes and rider position. These are minor complaints and are outweighed by the XR's excellent suspension and tractable power. But for all its improvements, it is still unlikely that the XR will become popular as an all-out enduro machine. It isn't weight, suspension or power that shoots down the XR, but what will keep the Honda out of enduro line-ups is the XR rider. Once he has ridden over the dunes and trails at a leisurely playbike pace, he discovers what the Honda does best. And after that, the XR will spend the rest of its days among the picnics and campers. It might look out of place—like a shark in a goldfish bowl—but it will actually be right at home. Nobody wants to ride just another enduro bike when he can ride the ultimate playbike. •



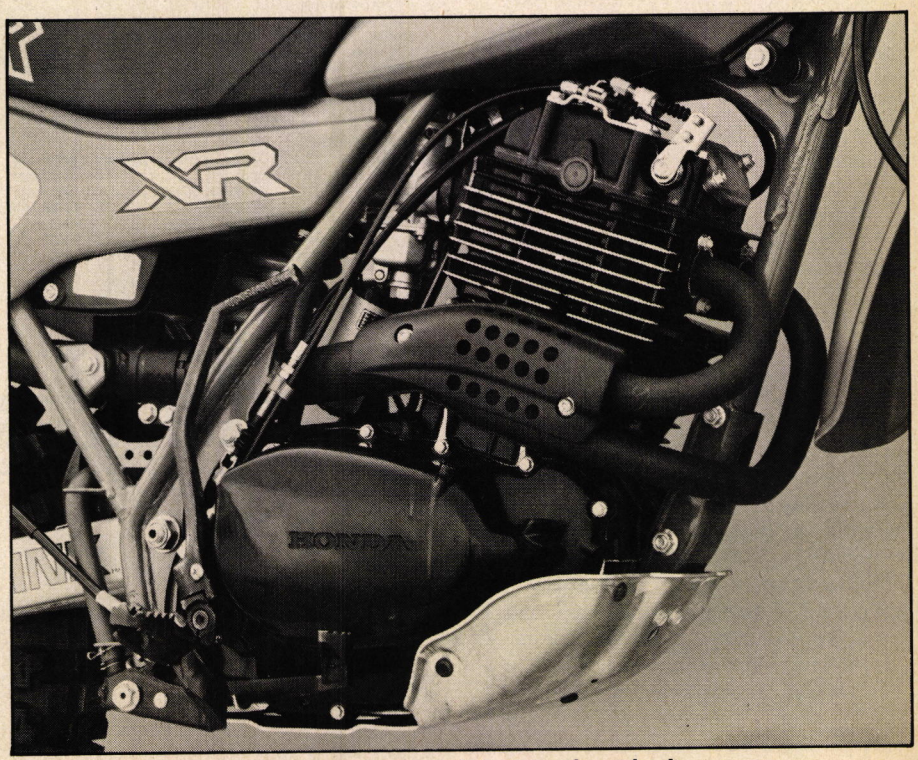
Slider replaces yesterday's roller

For less wear and longer life.



Ten valve Honda head

The reed counts as six.



The reed-valved thumper fights two-strokes with two-stroke technology

The automatic cable-operated compression release is just for kicks.

Continued

Ride Review

• Honda's finally convinced me that there is a good reason to own a four-stroke dirt bike. Until now I was a two-stroke freak who marveled at the speed and agility of the valveless motor in a competitive frame. As far as I was concerned, the two-stroke had no serious competition.

But the XR500R has changed things. Honda has developed a package that I can accept as a serious two-stroke alternative for a day in the woods. The XR has not yet superseded the two-stroke as an enduro bike because of a few problems. Excess weight is not really a problem with this bike, but a wide motor is. And until Honda alters its front-end geometry, the XR is not going to be the easiest or most stable bike to ride between trees. At the same time, the XR is more compatible with bark and leaves than any other four-stroke I know. *—David Dewhurst*

• The designation XR500R spells out something more than just Honda's high-tech thumper. To me, anyway, it spells the end of an era. You know the one. It involves a little oil, a little gasoline, a little shaking and a little riding. The way I see it, if you're emotionally tied to two-stroke dirt bikes, relish them while you can, because the XR500R convinces me that they're on their way out.

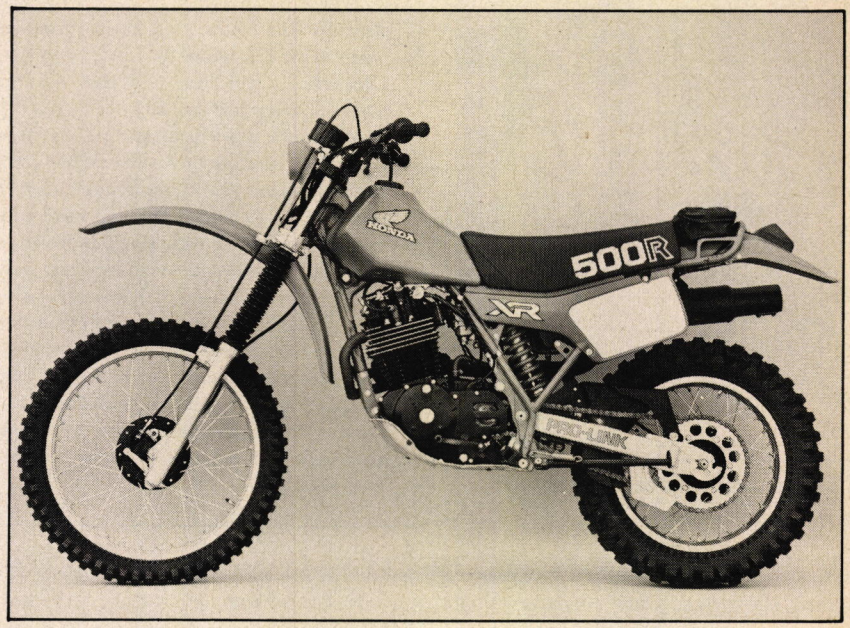
No, the XR isn't on a par with the best of the two-strokes. And it isn't a motocrosser. But it *is* good enough at what it does to point the way to a four-stroke future. One in which you won't have to trade away light weight or good acceleration to gain huge benefits in torque and tractability. Sure, I'll miss two-strokes. But I think that the next wave of thumpers will be so good that I won't miss them for long. Mama, sell my premix, I'm headed for four-stroke heaven. *—Larry Works*

• In the middle of an enduro is no time to discover that your bike has been lying to you. But that's exactly what the XR500 does. It lies. Sitting in the garage, the XR's looks told me that it was a full-on racer with motocross suspension and enduro-winning potential. And while it keeps its word about its excellent fork and Pro-Link rear end, once out on the trail I found that the XR's handling is far too twitchy and unstable to let it be a good racer. Plain and simple, the bike is a handful.

But the same characteristics that take the Honda out of enduro circles make it great for play. Its fast handling and usable power are well suited for trail riding and weekend fun—but not for competition. The XR is actually an excellent package, even if it won't admit its real purpose. You'll just have to ride the truth out of it.

—Mark Diotte

Honda XR500R



SPECIFICATIONS:

MOTORCYCLE: American Honda Motor Company
100 West Alondra Boulevard
Gardena, California 90247

CATEGORY: enduro

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2148

ENGINE

Type	four-stroke vertical single
Valve arrangement	single overhead camshaft, four valves per cylinder, reed-valve-controlled intake
Bore and stroke	89.0mm x 80.0mm
Displacement	497.7cc
Compression ratio	8.6:1
Carburetion	one 34mm Keihin slide/needle
Air filter	washable oiled foam element
Lubrication	wet sump
Starting system	primary kick
Ignition	magneto CDI
Charging system	none; direct AC lighting

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive	straight-cut gears; 2.379:1 ratio
Clutch	wet, multi-plate
Final drive	#520 chain (5/8-in. pitch, 1/4-in. width); 3.429:1 (14/48) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.462	20.084	3.7
II	1.647	13.436	5.6
III	1.250	10.197	7.4
IV	1.000	8.158	9.2
V	0.840	6.852	11.0

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front	air-spring, 37mm stanchion tube diameter/9.5 in (241mm)
Rear	Pro-Link, 4-way adjustable rebound damping, 10mm spring preload adjustment/10.0 in. (254mm)

BRAKES

Front	drum, single-leading shoe
Rear	drum, single-leading shoe, cable-operated

TIRES

Front	3.00 x 21 IRC Vulcanduro VE-31
Rear	5.00 x 17 IRC Vulcanduro VE-31

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight	289 lbs. (131kg)
Weight distribution	44.3% front, 55.7% rear
Wheelbase	55.5 to 57.3 in. (1410 to 1455mm)
Seat height	37.8 in. (960mm)
Handlebar width	33.3 in. (846mm)
Footpeg height	16.0 in. (406mm)
Ground clearance	12.0 in. (305mm) at skidplate
Steering head angle	28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.4 in. (112mm)
Frame	tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
Oil capacity	2.1 qt. (2.0/)
Fuel tank	plastic, 2.5 gal. (9.5/), including 0.8 gal. (3.0/) reserve
Instrumentation	speedometer, tripmeter resettable in tenths

WARRANTY: 90 days

AVAILABLE COLOR: red only

All weights and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make & Model	Horse-power	Wheel Travel Front/Rear, in.	Weight (fuel tank empty), lb.	Weight bias Front/Rear percent	Transmission number of speeds
Honda XR500R	NA	9.5/10.0	289	44.3/55.7	5
Yamaha IT465H	38.1	10.0/11.4	247	46.0/54.0	5
Suzuki PE400	30.9	11.3/11.3	250	46.4/53.6	5
Husqvarna 420 AXC	NA	11.5/11.9	239	45.6/54.4	4
Yamaha Pro-Tech 600	46.2	10.5/10.1	262	46.6/53.4	5
Kawasaki KLX 250	15.2	9.8/10.5	239	46.1/53.9	5

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There's a short cut on every enduro course.

It's called handling.

If you spend your enduros on a powerful bike with weak suspension, you're just making it rough on yourself.

Because there's an easier way. The Honda XR200R.

Its Pro-Link™ suspension offers truly progressive spring and damping rates. Softer for smaller bumps and progressively firmer as the bumps get bigger.

Exclusive dual Syntallic™ bushings cut friction in the forks. And even though the XR200R is stronger than ever, it's no heavier—223 pounds dry.

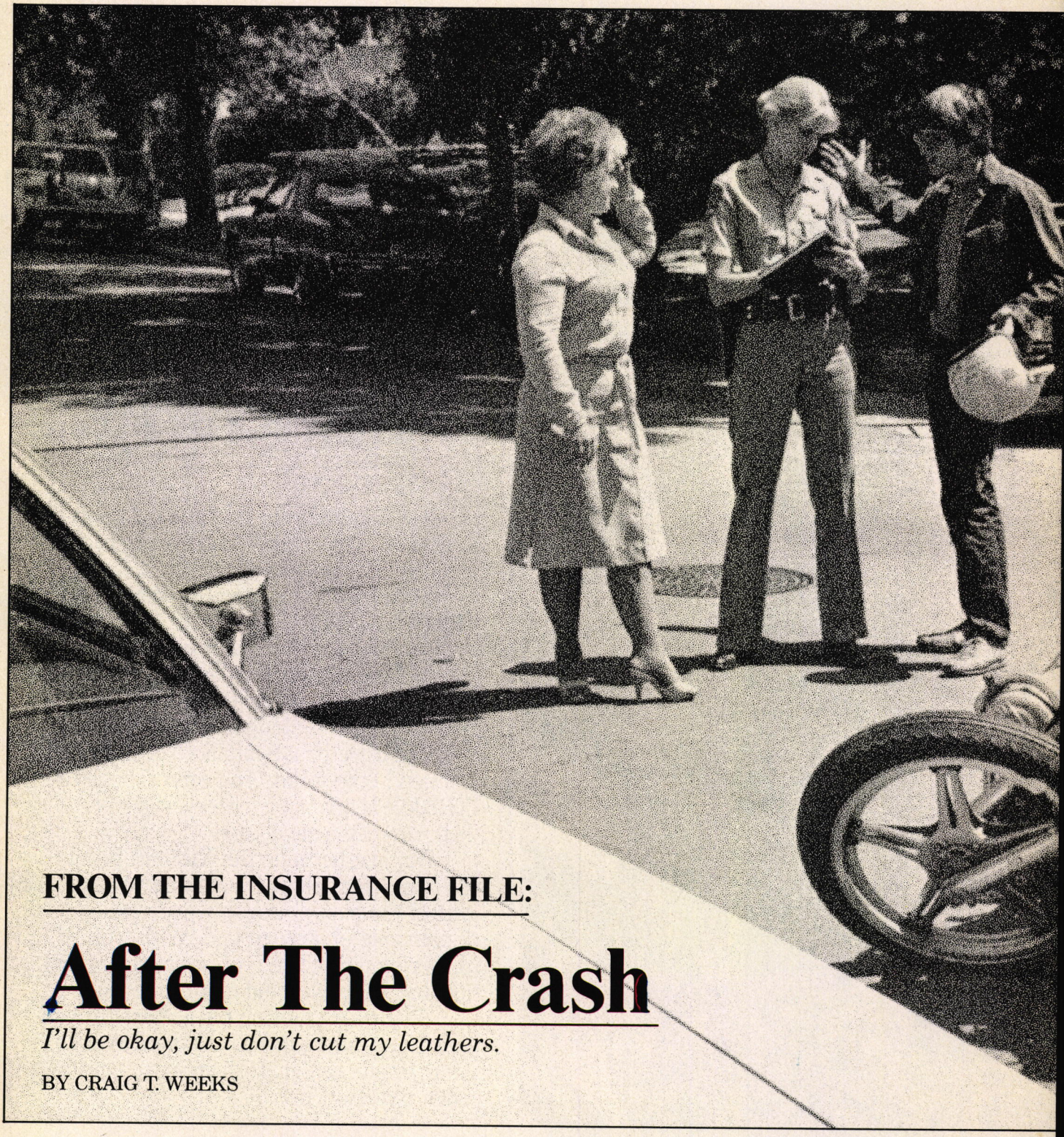
But just because the XR200R is light on its tires, don't think it's light on power. It has one of the best power-to-weight ratios of any four-stroke enduro around. With a broad powerband that'll let you spend less time looking for power and more time using it.

So if you're looking for a short cut you won't get caught using, sneak on over to your Honda dealer. He'll steer you in the right direction.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. Designed for off-road, operator use only. State laws affecting off-road motorcycles vary. XRs may not meet noise regulations in some states. Installation of high-performance parts may increase XRs decibel rating above legal levels in some states. Check local laws before installation. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. ©1981 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda Motor Co., Inc. Dept. 733, Box 9000, Van Nuys, Ca. 91409.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 CHRIS EASTMAN

FROM THE INSURANCE FILE:

After The Crash

I'll be okay, just don't cut my leathers.

BY CRAIG T. WEEKS

It is nearly a maxim of motorcycling that we all eventually fall down. And frequently, we manage to do it without any assistance. Riding too fast, an oil spot on the apex of an onramp curve, machine failure, rider error or simple brain fade. No one else is to blame.

But there are other types of accidents. The ones in which you've been helped along in your interview with the pavement. The ones caused by someone pulling out in front of you, or where a work crew left a load of sand midway through a blind corner, or where you're forced into the curb by a driver seemingly intent on ignoring you until it's too late. The ones where someone else might be to blame.

After you pick yourself up—or *are* picked up—you're thrust into a strange world of estimators, adjusters, forms, releases, comparative negligence, insurance limits and the like. An entire industry exists for the sole purpose of dealing with vehicle accidents and the losses that accompany them. And while that after-crash world will probably continue to be strange, there's no reason why it should remain completely alien. A few tips on what to expect can help you cope with what happens after the crash.

THE STING:

You're entitled to financial recovery in

an accident case, not to a free ride. The insurance bureaucracy was established especially to spot such fraudulent claims. So, in a word, don't.

DON'T CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR OWN LOSS:

In many states the law evaluates the conduct of both parties involved in an accident. This is called comparative negligence, and it boils down to the amount of damages being reduced in proportion to a plaintiff's own negligence. It means that a car might have turned into you—the traditional left-through-the-intersection-didn't-see-you-head-on—but if it was dark when the accident happened, you were speeding and your headlamp wasn't working . . . you get the idea. And despite the new name, comparative negligence is the same message that you've heard since you started riding: Wear protective clothing, maintain your bike in good working order and ride defensively, with an eye toward sanity.

AT THE ACCIDENT SITE:

Assume that you've just been involved in a motorcycle/automobile collision and that you've picked yourself up. In other words, your injuries are slight enough so that you can still function pretty efficiently. The general idea in the aftermath of an accident is to act like a sponge: Gather as much information as you can, but don't give it out. Don't be psychopathic about it, however. You can and should tell who you are, whether or not you're insured and with which company, show your license and provide other statistical data. But don't discuss the facts of the accident with *anyone* other than a peace officer. Even then, there is no requirement that you volunteer anything detrimental to your case. And cut the histrionics. Don't yell, use obscene language or try to pick a fight. You're building a case from the moment the dust clears, and you want witnesses to remember what happened, not that you threw a tantrum.

At the same time, you want to gather all the facts that you can. You'll need to know vehicle license numbers, where witnesses were in relation to the accident, names, and more. You have a far better chance to find out what witnesses think they saw while the crowd is milling around comparing notes excitedly. Versions of the incident tend to be massaged into other forms after the witnesses have had time to reflect on events. If the driver of the car is ever going to admit fault, it will be in the first few minutes after the collision. And if your luck is on the rebound, it might end up in the accident report.

YOU OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES:

As garish as it might sound, it can't hurt to photograph yourself and your bike after the accident. Use color film and a flash; Polaroid is fine. Get the shot from several different angles. Do it before the bruises go away and before someone starts straightening your motorcycle.

Then check out the accident site—and take your camera with you. Measure skidmarks, locate the *exact* point of impact and keep track of the road conditions, the weather and the traffic at the time of the crash. You literally can't get too much information. And get it as soon as possible. If you can't do it yourself, get someone reliable to do it, within hours of the accident. And don't improvise on any of the information. One tainted "fact" could throw out everything else you've gathered.

Continued

DON'T REFUSE MEDICAL HELP:

If you have an injury, see a doctor immediately. Be sure to point out every area of pain and possible injury. Submit to suggested X-rays or other diagnostic procedures. Accept treatment, and follow your doctor's orders.

The question of medical treatment is a major problem for many motorcyclists. It isn't a sign of strength to refuse treatment, it's stupidity. It abuses your body, which will begin repayment of your transgressions when it reaches middle age, and it is equally stuipd because it jeapordizes any eventual financial recovery. A permanent limp might get you better service at a motorcycle parts counter, but that's about all you can expect.

THE INSURANCE ADJUSTER:

Adjusters are professionals. They are usually experienced and are almost never naive or gullible. Outrageous demands, threats of massive lawsuits and claims of extensive and unlikely losses won't help you in the slightest. Not all insurance companies do it, but if the firm has determined that you are going to get a settlement, you might be able to get some money in advance if you can demonstrate some particular hardship. Insurance companies seem to prefer a monthly payment scheme, such as a small regular payment per month until you make your final settlement.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

If your injuries are relatively straightforward and minor, consider handling your case yourself. Figure your damages in the following manner: First total your wage loss, if any, as a result of the accident. Then compute your total personal property loss. This could include the estimate to repair or replace your bike as well as the value of the clothing damaged in your trip down the pavement. Last, add up the total cost of medical service related to your injuries. Include future costs that your doctor tells you will be incurred, and don't leave out ambulance fees, emergency room costs, prescriptions and therapy. Multiply the medical cost by four and add it to the total of the wage loss and personal property loss. This figure is a good starting point for negotiations. The reason for the multiplier is to build up a rough figure for pain and suffering. If the adjuster thinks that you've been negligent—that you were in part to blame for the accident, and so the amount of your recovery should be lower—he'll tell you in short order.

THE SETTLEMENT:

Once you and the adjuster have reached a figure, you are expected to sign a release of all claims related to the accident before you can collect. In cases where you have received some money in advance, that figure will be deducted from the total amount. The key in this stage of the process is to not sign a final release until you are sure of your medical situation. If there is any doubt, get another checkup. Once the release is signed, you probably won't be able to get additional damage compensation, even if you find out later that there were injuries that you weren't aware of at the time you settled.

THE UNINSURED MOTORIST:

The problem with uninsured drivers is two-fold. First, the uninsured driver might not have any assets even if your claim is indisputable. Second, and equally important, you lose the very real advantage of working within an established and usually predictable claims processing bureaucracy. As always, begin by getting all the information you can; then, if attempted negotiations fail and the matter is too big for small claims court, you might want to seek some professional advice.

In any case, be sure to maintain a file with all the paperwork you accumulate in your transactions with the after-crash world. And make it a big file. Make copies of everything you send out. Don't lose names and phone numbers. Keep everything on paper. Finally, don't be in too big a hurry to settle. The system doesn't reward disorganization or impatience. And it can be hazardous to your health and pocketbook to find out the hard way. •

Craig Weeks is an attorney and motorcyclist in Sacramento, California.

Hardball Rules

• The path to settlement is generally smoooth if everyone stays reasonable. The insurance company has handled hundreds of cases like yours and knows from past experience what the case is worth. Bearing in mind the points in the accompanying article about gathering information and getting medical attention as well as the formula for computing your damages, you and the adjuster will probably each come away feeling you did okay when the compromising is done.

When the case is simple and the damages easily ascertained, there is no reason not to do it yourself if you'll get organized and perservere through the whole process. It's a different story, however, when things are complicated. Any case involving permanent injury should be handled by an attorney. The same applies for severe injury cases. Accidents involving several parties, government employees and/or vehicles, foreigners, out-of-staters, or other unusual factors should receive professional scrutiny. All states have rules concerning how long you can wait after the accident to file your lawsuit. And a whole different set of rules may be involved if the government is a possible defendant. Check these limitations carefully and if you are confused about any details, you had best check with a lawyer. You shouldn't have too much trouble finding an attorney who will discuss the case with you without charge. After all, this is the only way he'll be able to decide if he wants the case. If it's a loser you'll be told why.

Don't delay. It usually costs no more to have legal help involved right from the start. This is because most personal injury cases are handled on a "contingency" basis. This means that when the case is settled or won, you get some of the money and the lawyer gets some. If you don't win you pay nothing. It is not standard practice for you to pay anything toward expenses. The general rule is that if the attorney accepts the case he pays for everything including investigation expenses, filing fees, depositions and the like. If the case is really shaky don't be surprised if you are asked to share in the expenses, but it isn't usual practice. You should always have a written contract with your attorney, specifying in detail what he will be doing for you and how much it will cost. His percentage of the recovery generally should not exceed 40 percent unless the facts are extremely unfavorable. You each should pay your own expenses out of your respective shares.

Attorneys are just as susceptible to prejudices as anyone else. Talk to your potential representative. If he shows a lack of understanding or even some hostility towards motorcycling, get someone else. It's not like there is a shortage of lawyers.

When it comes time for settlement discussions don't let your lawyer do your thinking for you. He works for you, not the opposite. You know how to compute what your ballpark settlement should be. Modify that figure by considering the plusses and minuses of your particular facts and don't be stampeded into settling, especially until you have carefully considered your medical situation.

Lastly, try to extract a promise that he will keep you informed. Some cases take years to resolve, and you don't want to find yourself going for months at a time wondering what the hell is going on.

—*Craig Weeks*

MINITEST:

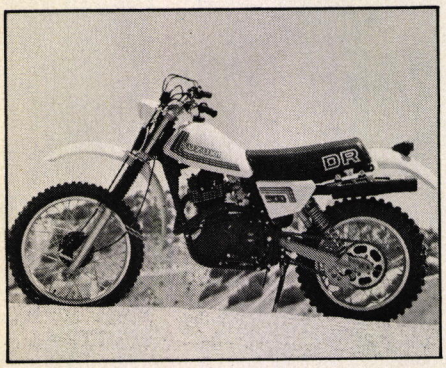
Suzuki DR500X

Suzuki's third try gives you a third choice.

• At last, Suzuki's DR thumper has a mission. Even though it still holds many of the compromises of its predecessors, in its third incarnation the DR500 finally is able to compete on equal footing with Yamaha and Honda for the title of King Thump.

In the past, the DR offered relative light weight and acceptable handling, but it suffered drastically in the power department. And because thumper appeal is based, in part at least, on gut-shaking grunt, the DR faltered in comparisons. But no more. The '81 DR is armed with the most potent engine of the current four-stroke crop. Its power starts at the first crack of the throttle, as any good thumper should, and then continues. As the revs climb, the DR just keeps on going, building to a respectable climax before dropping off into the four-stroke Dead Zone at the upper end of the rpm scale.

The Suzuki owes much of its newly-found steam to an increase in engine displacement.



The 88mm bore was retained from last year's 400, but the stroke was lengthened from 65.2mm to 82mm. The resulting 102cc-larger powerplant is topped by a new head that features four valves and Suzuki's Twin Swirl Combustion Chamber.

On the trail, Suzuki's serious approach to the new engine pays off and the DR shows its XR500-eating mettle. But other parts of the bike still typify shortcomings found on earlier DRs. The fork, for example, is still not up to par with the units found on Suzuki motocrossers. It is undersize, undersprung, short on travel and provides no adjustability without aircaps. If the DR is ridden on casual trails and nothing more challenging, the front suspension is fine. But the fork imposes a severe limitation on the bike's potential for anything more serious.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 DAVID DEWHURST

Suzuki's DR500 grows up into a more balanced personality

More capacity and a four-valve head finally give the DR an identity.

Scoring slightly higher is the rear suspension. The piggyback Kayaba shocks, which appear to be a bit gimmicky at first, are actually deceptively effective. Everyone who swung a leg over the DR was surprised at the machine's plush feel on all but the roughest terrain. And the shocks do work well—considering that they are on a 290-pound bike designed with slightly more than eight inches of travel. This is where playbike thinking again limits the Suzuki. The DR's engine begs comparison with Honda's XR500R, but sheer wheel travel turns any shootout in favor of the XR. If it is to compete with Pro-Link XRs that have 10 inches of travel, the DR will have to offer upgraded suspension. Eight inches of travel, no matter how smooth, is still eight inches of travel.

Despite suspension gripes, though, the DR's overall handling is quite good. The nimble way it skims over narrow trails and jumps rocky streams belies its weight. But it is fireroading that the Suzuki loves most. Just lean it over, roll it on and let that fantastic power do all the work. Here the DR's short legs are no longer a handicap. By keeping weight low to the ground, the Suzuki gives its rider a feeling of slidability that makes Springsteen-style cornering the only way to go. The Suzuki has evolved into a creature of the broad, sweeping turn.

And the DR continues to evolve. It is no longer the off-size misfit with an inoffensive personality and no guts. The DR has become a serious contender for the ultrathump crown, capable of racing, but much better at just having fun.

—Ron Lawson

SUZUKI DR500X

Importer: U.S. Suzuki Motor Corporation
3251 East Imperial Highway
Brea, California 92621

Category	trail
Suggested retail price	$1999
Engine type	four-stroke vertical single
Valve arrangement	single-overhead camshaft, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	88.0mm x 82.0mm
Displacement	498.7cc
Compression ratio	8.7:1
Carburetion	one 35mm Mikuni slide/needle
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	36mm stanchion tube diameter/8.6 in. (218mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	5-way adjustable spring preload /8.2 in. (208mm)
Wheelbase	57.0 to 57.5 in. (1448 to 1461mm)
Seat height	35.0 in. (889mm)
Weight	290 lbs. (132kg)
Warranty	none
Available color	white only

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We know because we just finished racing it in the world's worst races.

Within months of its introduction, it became the first three-wheeler in history to enter and finish the Baja 1000, the Mexicali 250, the Parker 400 and the Baja 500.

And for an encore, it took an overall first for three-wheelers in the 1981 Bridgestone-SCORE Off-Road World Championship.

Needless to say, no ordinary three-wheeler could do all this.

Because no ordinary three-wheeler is built like this.

Its 248 cc MX type two-stroke engine is the biggest powerplant we've ever put on three wheels.

And to make those wheels handle, we created the first front and rear suspension system for a production three-wheeler. A gas-charged shock in back, air-forks up front.

The 1982 model of the ATC250R is available now. Featuring a new hydraulic disc brake in the rear as well as everything you need to start racing.

Dog-leg levers, cleated footpegs, a manual clutch, a five-speed transmission, a kick starter and full carcass radial tires.

There's only one thing it's missing. Something worth racing against.

HONDA

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Tour Lion Two-Piece Riding Suit

Reflecting a stylish design in protection.

• You can't buy the ideal cold-weather riding suit because it just doesn't exist. But although no one suit can please everyone, you'll find a happy compromise between form, function and comfort in Tour Lion's two-piece cold-weather suit. And the suit's newly developed Early Warning fabric even makes riding safer at night.

But while the Tour Lion suit doesn't act like the average cold-weather suit, neither does it look like most other reflective suits. Unlike the typical luminous orange, the Early Warning fabric, coated with Scotch-Lite, is woven into the black material that forms the collar, shoulders and arm trim. In daylight, the black panel forms a stylish contrast to the silver body material, but at night the black comes to life under headlights, glowing bright silver. It's a perfect example of function not destroying form.

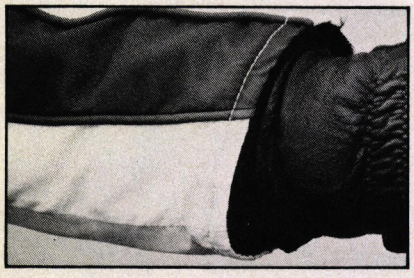
The rest of the suit performs with the same concern for form and function. The Poly-Slim insulation, for instance, is a thin layer of polyester. It is remarkably effective in handling the cold without adding unnecessarily to the bulk of the suit. Indeed, the jacket is light and comfortable enough to be worn for non-motorcycling occasions.

But it's when you mount up to ride that you're reminded of the suit's main purpose: to protect you while riding in foul weather. The jacket's two-way front zipper overlaps a velcro-fastened storm flap to stop rain and wind from passing through the the zipper and onto your body. And except in the coldest weather, the elasticized back is enough to prevent wind leaks. For added protection, there's an elasticized belt to prevent wind from blowing up inside the jacket. Though this seems like an entirely practical idea, the belt turned out to be one of the only awkwardly executed parts of the jacket. It often slipped out of reach, even though it is retained by flaps on the two lower pockets, and after a year's hard wear, it started to pull out of the side seam.

Far more useful is the jacket's three-position collar. It can hang like a regular shirt collar, or have its loose ends held in place by velcro, or it can be turned all the way up and zipped shut to form an effective throat protector against the coldest weather. It looks fine as a shirt collar and it keeps your chin from being beaten to death at speed when it's velcroed in place. But when upturned, the collar has the annoying habit of allowing a small draft to blow down its back, no matter how it is positioned. Inner drafts are also a minor problem with the jacket's sleeves, which let a draft sneak past the knitted cuff. In hot weather, the gentle breeze makes the jacket bearable, but in the cold, it becomes a problem unless you ride with a gauntlet glove. Even so, this disadvantage could easily be remedied by adding a velcro strap to each sleeve.

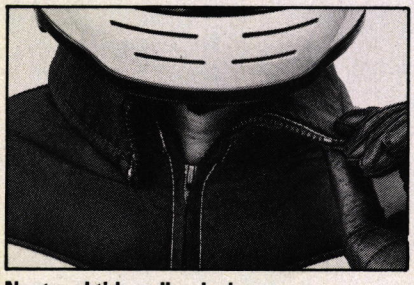
No such problems affect the bib trousers, which have velcro and zippers to form an airtight seal against the cold. Double layers of material in the seat and at the front of each leg from above the knees to the ankle make the pants resistant to all but Arctic conditions. But like the rest of the suit—or any other sewn suit—the pants are only shower-proof. During a heavy storm, water will soak through the seams. Like other cold-weather suits, the Tour Lion will fend off only medium-bad weather, but it does it better and with more convenience than most. Each pantleg, for instance, zips along its entire outer side to make dressing simple. The suspenders hook into place without a struggle and the pantlegs won't ride up as you ride on because they're held in place by elasticized stirrups.

The Tour Lion two-piece, available from Rocky Cycle Company, Inc., 1250 Elko Drive, Sunnyvale, California 94086, might not stand up to truly rotten weather but it comes closer than most. The suit keeps you warm more often than not, it doesn't cramp your riding style and you don't end up looking like a luminous Michelin Man. And that really *is* better than most. —*David Dewhurst*



Nothing up the sleeve but cold air

Velcro should aid the knitted cuff.

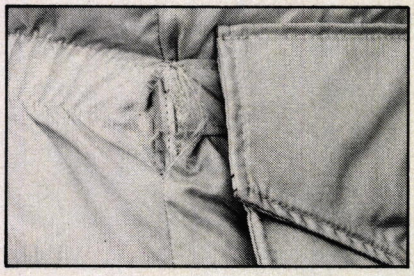


Neat and tidy collar design

Velcroed ends don't cause a flap.

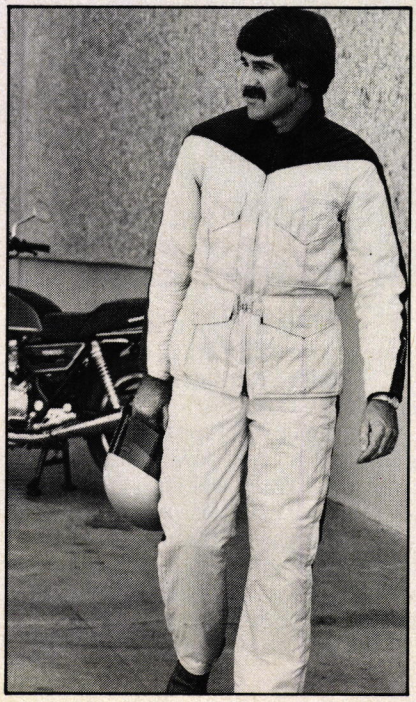
Zippered all the way

High collar keeps out winter's worst.



Belt and seam part company

The only problem in 12-month's use.



SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Race Courses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

EDITED BY DAIN GINGERELLI

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 DAVID DEWHURST

Engineered for Speed

Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki's formulas for fast Superbikes.

• The development process never stops in Superbike racing. Pipes, carbs and heads are juggled to provide the right horsepower combination for each individual racetrack. And with every additional bit of speed squeezed from the bike, a new part breaks or buckles that must be repaired before even more speed is sought.

As a result, the development process in Superbike racing is often as chaotic as it is endless. Yet each of the major teams—Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki—has its own development strategy that shines through the race-by-race thrash. In many ways the key to understanding Superbike race results lies in the team manager's formula for speed.

The Yoshimura Suzuki team, for example, is struggling far more than you would expect considering its two consecutive championships. Even though Yoshimura has more

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THE SUPER BIKERS

abc WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS

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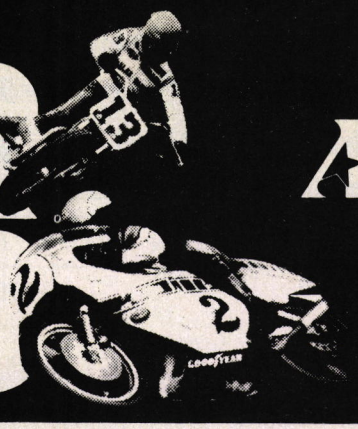
AMA



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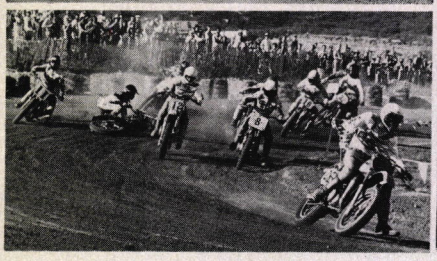

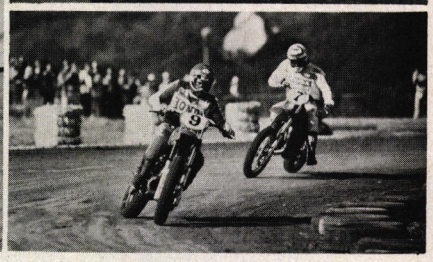

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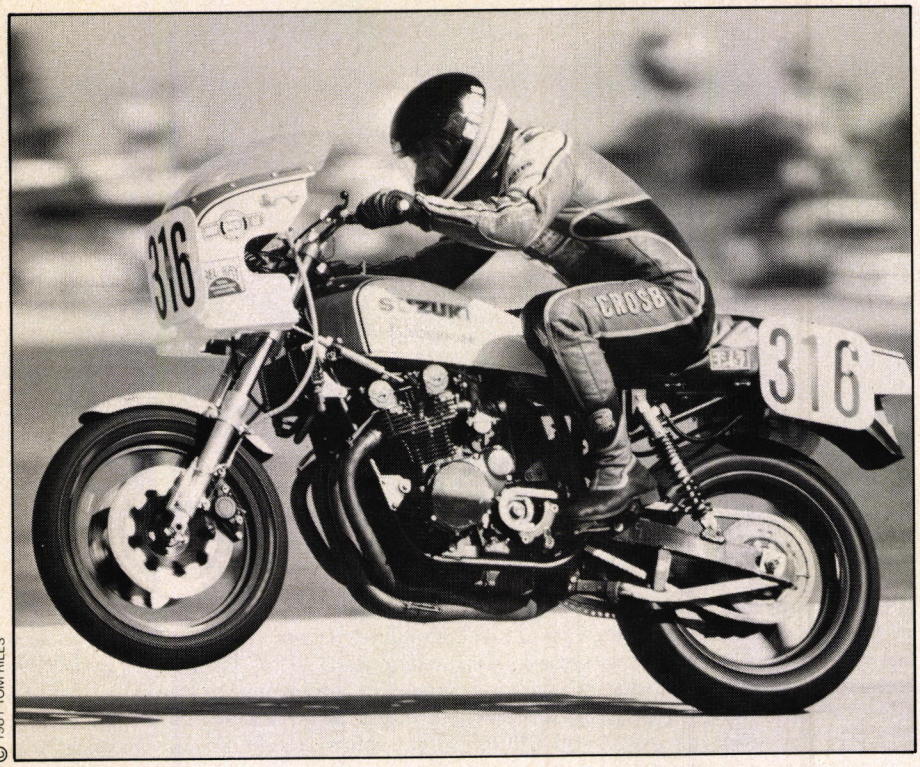
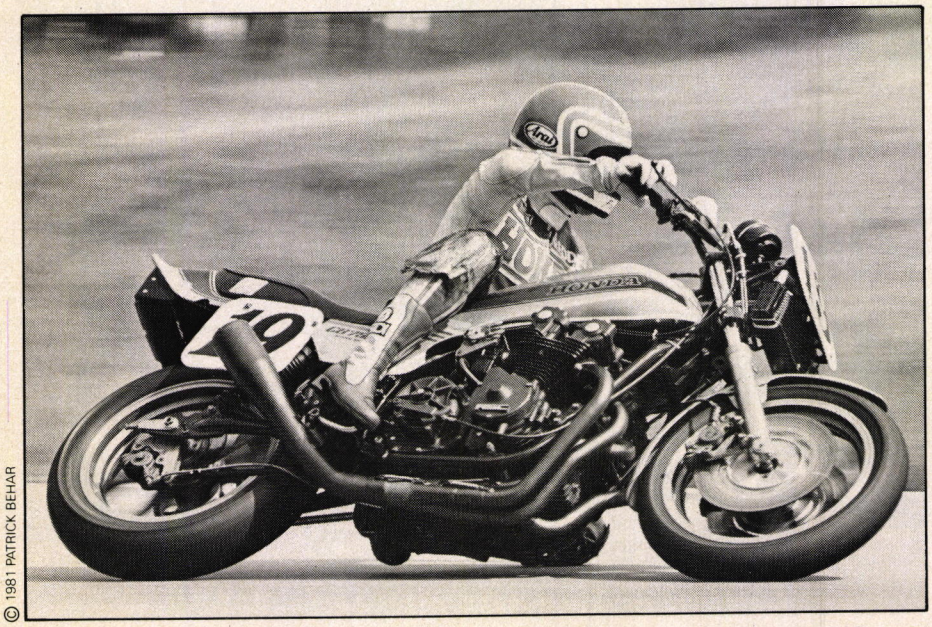


© 1981 TOM RILES

than four years of experience with the GS1000 package, the team's GS1000S replicas suffer from a lack of horsepower. The reasons are many. Last year the team lost its most experienced mechanics to Honda shortly before the season began, while the complication and expense of the Yoshimura organization's move into new facilities this year left it without a dynamometer. These factors have proven crucial at a time when the team has had to resort to ever more rarified rpm in order to coax competitive horsepower from the GS1000 engine. Only Yoshimura's unparalleled experience in four-stroke roadracing—something both Honda and Kawasaki pay tribute to—has enabled it to weather a firestorm of crankshaft problems while maintaining race-winning form.

With engine development stagnant, team manager Fujio Yoshimura has concentrated on suspension technology. Every bit of experience with the GS1000S-replica's anti-dive front fork pays off in new-found speed, he reports. He also believes the team has made a major breakthrough with its patented "Swingcross" rear suspension. It works like this: The bottom mount of each rear shock is connected by a rod to the frame near the swingarm pivot. As the swingarm moves upward, the bottom mount effectively moves forward, maintaining the shock's fairly vertical relationship to the ground throughout the rear suspension's travel. Although



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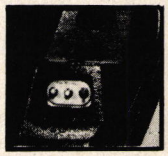

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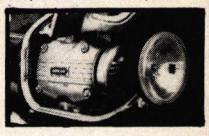

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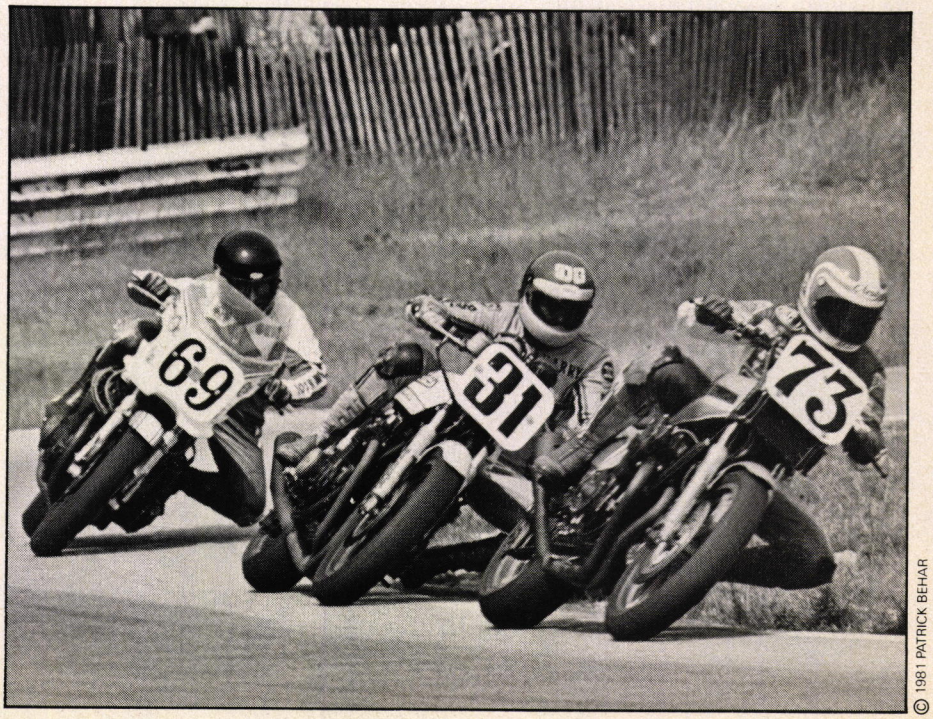
Yoshimura says the overall effect is regressive-rate suspension—not rising-rate as has been reported elsewhere—the system has important benefits. Basically, he says, reduced binding in the swingarm pivot, effectively lighter unsprung weight and lighter springing and damping rates improve the rear suspension's response to small bumps and improve its resistance to fade. Team Yoshimura might have had problems generating horsepower this year, but it's done its best to get all it has to the ground.

At Honda, meanwhile, the development process is mostly a matter of finding the weak links in the CB750F/CB900F-replica and repairing them one by one. Roadracing team manager Ron Murakami says he had two goals when he joined the team in the fall of '80: first, to lighten the bike to minimum weight; and second, to eliminate all unnecessary friction.

Perhaps because of Murakami's background as a parts fabricator, these goals have taken shape in the form of comprehensive detailing. All extraneous brackets have been trimmed away. The oil tank is built from light-gauge aluminum and the bike uses total-loss ignition with a very small battery. Even things like inner tubes and wire ties have been eliminated to produce a lean machine. As Murakami says, "You eliminate a gram here and a gram there and 454 grams later you have a pound. There's nothing secret about it. It just adds up."

To take friction out of the Honda Superbike equation, the transmission and driveline have been treated with a special process. Furthermore, simple shielded bearings replace sealed bearings. The elimination of friction has also proved the key to making the suspension work. The fork has been blueprinted and the switch to easily rebuildable Ohlins



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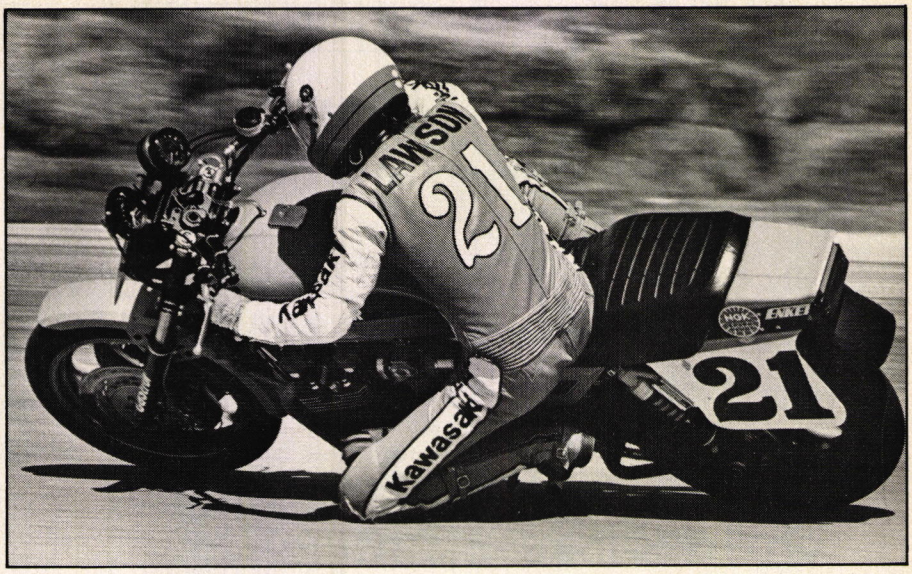
shocks simplified the task of changing damping for each track.

Like Yoshimura, Honda says its Formula 1 program actually has helped Superbike development. The ability to experiment with the Honda engine in an unlimited formula has helped the team optimize wheelbase, weight distribution and cornering clearance in the Superbikes. And yet, like Yoshimura, the task of maintaining two F/1 bikes as well as two Superbikes has stretched the team's resources to the limit.

Unlike Suzuki and Honda, Kawasaki can point to a concerted development program this season. Team manager Gary Mathers says, "I spent most of last year thinking about this year. And in racing, being ready is everything." Indeed, the race team had substantial input into the design of the new generation of big Kawasakis. The new KZ1000J frame has taken the wobble out of the Superbike's handling. With a good chassis at last, Mathers says, the team has stopped trying to win races with sheer horsepower. Engine development this year has focused on an improvement in low-end throttle response through a combination of work with cylinder head flow—larger diameter valves in the new cylinder head are a big improvement over last year's twin-plug design with its deep valve pockets—carburetor jetting and the team's Kerker pipes.



But the real secret to Kawasaki's success this year might be more intangible. Kawasaki doesn't only have the smallest team, but it also has the fewest bikes to care for—just Lawson's Superbike and KR250. The addition of Rob Muzzi as crew chief has drastically improved team morale. But most important, Kawasaki has suffered few catastrophic breakdowns. So while other teams have been rebuilding between races, Kawasaki has been testing new ideas.

The combination of all these factors makes a team's luck. Because of luck, Kawasaki has been able to rationalize the development of its Superbike, while other teams have been heads down in baskets of broken parts. And it could be that the ability to look far up the track and anticipate the future is the key to race wrenching as well as to race riding.

—*Michael Jordan*

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SPEEDWAY:

Thumbs Up In The Coliseum

Penhall feeds 15 other riders to the lions.

• Bruce Penhall, U.S. National Speedway Champ, knew what it would take to win the United States qualifier round for the World Final: "The heat races will be won at the starting line." And so the 24-year-old racer, who looks like he would be more at home astride a surfboard than on a motorcycle, prepared himself for the qualifier during the only practice session on Wednesday.

Penhall's disciplined practice paid off. He had a perfect night Saturday, winning all five of his heats. It was the second time in as many years the Southern California rider has pulled off a slam, since it was last fall when he won his five heats in the U.S. National.

Penhall had Kelly Moran scienced out in the first heat: "The trick is to beat Kelly Moran out of the gate. He's been getting real good starts in England this year." Penhall did just that, leading young Moran into Turn One of the first heat. After four laps, Penhall led Moran across the finish line, too. And as he predicted, the next three heats were all won wire-to-wire.

But in heat five he broke his hole-shot string, and Dennis Sigalos got the jump out of the gate. And for better than one lap Penhall saw Sigalos' roost of decomposed granite. Then exiting Turn Two, Penhall set him up, and that was that. As far as the racing was concerned, anyway.

Meanwhile the race organizers were up to their polyester pants making sure the evening had few problems. This was more than just a qualifier round to them. It was also a shakedown cruise for the 1982 World Final, which is traditionally held at Wembly Olympic Stadium in England. The FIM had already awarded the U.S. the event next year—the first time ever for the final to be held this side of The Pond. But the Coliseum still had to pass a mandatory inspection, which meant running an FIM-sanctioned race.

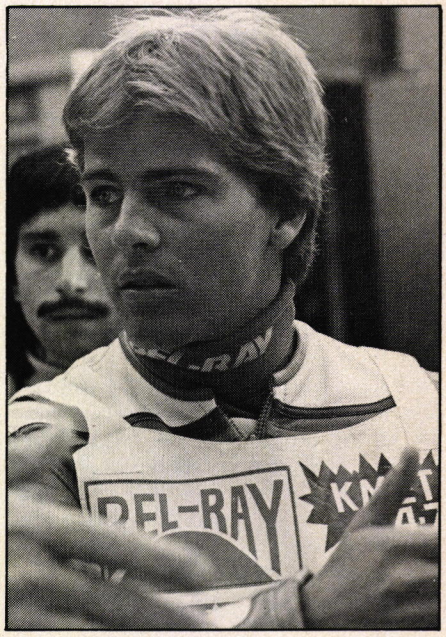
But before we get to 1982, or even to the 1981 World Final, a little background on speedway bikes: Rules call for a 500cc engine-displacement limit. There are two popular models available—the Czechoslovakian Jawa and the English Weslake. Both are single-cylinder engines featuring total-loss lubrication, and they both burn methanol fuel. They are capable of producing about 60 horsepower, and at 160 pounds, have a potential top speed of about 130 miles-per-hour. And they have no brakes. Exciting, indeed.

All speedway tracks are oval, and to satisfy FIM international rules, they must excede a quarter-mile in distance. The Coliseum track is based on the 437 yard running track that encircles the football field.

To groom the Coliseum for speedway, the promoters hauled in enough wood chips to pad the running surface of the track with a foot-deep cushion, then topped the chips with 300 truckloads of clay. A frosting layer of decomposed granite was sprinkled to provide traction. After two days of watering, the track was groomed and smoothed for racing. There are, of course, safety features, including a collapsible wire-mesh fence around the track to prevent a bike from smashing through to the crowd. And according to the promoters there's enough give in the catch fence to prevent a rider from ending up as a leather-and-flesh spit-wad.

A tall order to fill, but it was done. And now it appears the 1982 World Final will be held in the Los Angeles Coliseum.

As for Penhall, he doesn't care where it's held, this year or next. "I just want to be World Champion," he said before the qualifier. —*Dain Gingerelli*



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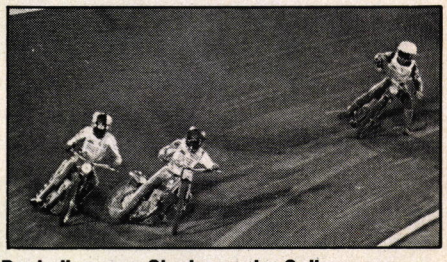
Penhall confers with a referee

Maybe just asking directions to Wembley.



Penhall passes Sigalos at the Coliseum

The hole shot is the whole show.

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CYCLE GUIDE

HARD RIDERS WITH THE RIGHT LINES.

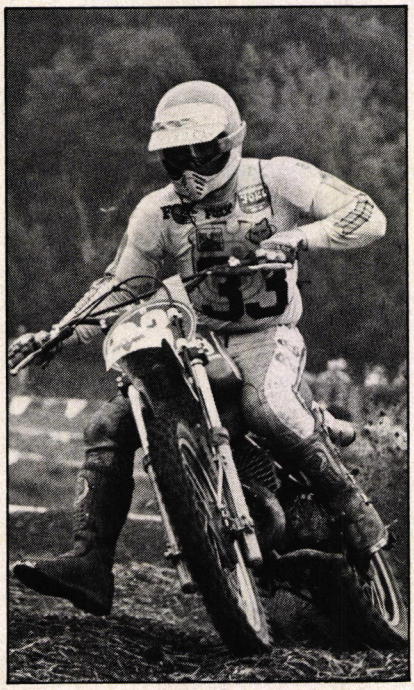
Pit Bits

• *On Any Sunday II* star and American national speedway champ **Bruce Penhall** did it again. After whiffing his competitors at the United States qualifying round for the World Final, Penhall made it another perfect score at Vojens, Denmark, during the Inter-Continental Finals. Vojens is the last stop before the World Finals in Wembley Stadium. Penhall's five-out-of-five was even more **impressive** in that the race was held in the rain. But *OAS II* veterans know Penhall likes to race in the wet.

• A couple of other Yanks aren't doing too badly overseas, either. Dave Aldana and **Mike Baldwin** (you recall he was the hottest thing on roadrace slicks in 1978 until a **crash** at Daytona sidelined him for over a year) won the Suzuka Eight Hour endurance roadrace in Japan. Aldana and Baldwin compete in the world endurance roadrace championship for Honda France and won at Suzuka on an **RCB1000.** It was sweet success for Honda, too, since that firm owns the track and has been shut out by Yoshimura-Suzuki over the past two years. Welcome back to Suzuka, Honda. And welcome back to roadracing, Baldwin. Aldana? He's always been around. And always will be. Thank God.

• If the shoe fits, wear it: Let's get sideways for a minute and talk flattrack. Ken Maely, steelshoe salesman for just about every flattracker in the country, has **developed** a new **one-size-fits-all steelshoe.** It's not for racing, though. It's a charm for bracelets, and should help keep your **lady friend's** feet firmly planted in the pits while you find the groove on the oval. Write Maely at 8580 Bedford Motor Way, Corona, California 91720. Ask for the **foot-long charm.**

• Yamaha's Neil Hudson recently pointed out to Americans how to race world championship GPs. By placing second in both motos of the Unadilla 250 USGP he garnered enough points for first-overall. **Hudson** didn't risk a spill for the glory of a moto win, thus increasing his chances of catching defending champ Georges Jobe in the 250 points tally. Jobe sat out Unadilla with a sprained wrist. Hudson **didn't look spectacular** at Unadilla, and played bridesmaid to Americans Donnie Hansen and Steve Wise. But the Englishman kept both Honda riders in sight—each moto for two relatively safe second-place finishes—enough for the overall win. So the question Americans should be asking now is, are the Americans as crafty at winning as the Europeans?, instead of, Are the **Americans faster** than their Euro contemporaries? Recall, Hudson runs the entire GP circuit, while Hansen and Wise compete in only one GP a year—Unadilla, where there's fame and glory to winning on home turf. Hudson paces himself all season, using craft, consistency *and* speed. And that is the secret to winning any championship. Along, of course, with **luck.** The only American to contest the entire 250 GP circuit is Husky-mounted **Mike Guerra.** In his rookie season, Guerra is learning to qualify for a serious bout in the future.



Mike Guerra returns home to Unadilla

The plebe pays his first-year dues.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 PAUL BUCKLEY

Neil Hudson makes his point at Unadilla

When second place is just good enough.

Continued

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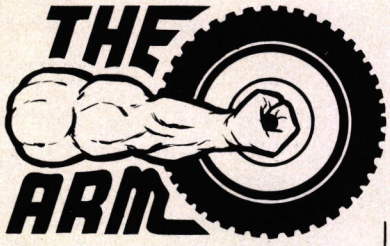

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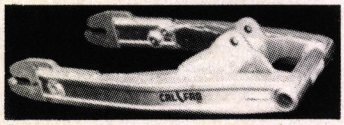

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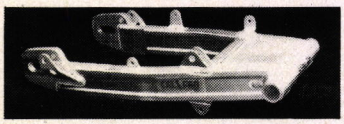

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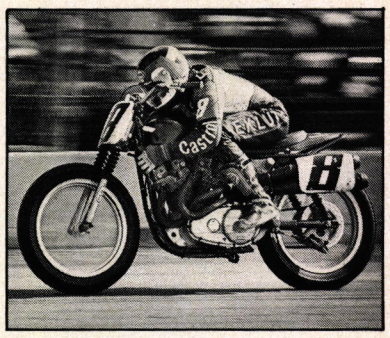


PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 TOM RILES

Eklund and Class C Boys go off restriction

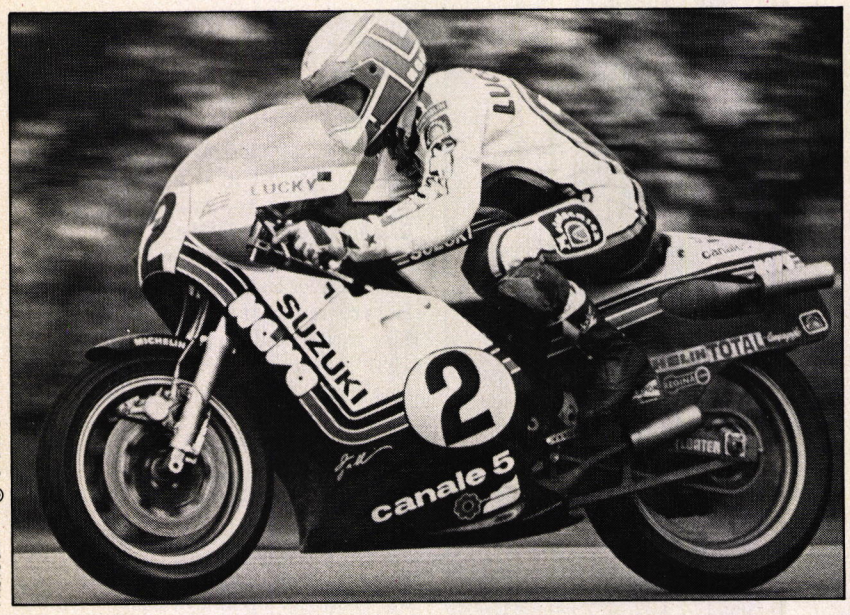
AMA gives in to big mouths.

• **Restricted Area:** The AMA has reportedly dropped the restriction-plate rule for 1982. Recall our story in the May 1981 issue, *Just Like Old Times*, which reported Harley-Davidson's chief Dick O'Brien. He said the ruling would help teams such as Yamaha find horsepower, since every Class C engine would be equipped with a **carburetor** restriction plate, limiting the amount of air to produce horsepower. As OB stated, it eventually means an extensive R&D program to squeeze out what further horsepower might be available from the engine. Thus, the cost to win remains the same—or is increased. Perhaps remission of the rule is good for Yamaha too. According to sources at **Yamaha,** the Virago-based 750, in development stages by Roberts-Lawill Racing, produces about as much pony-power as an XR750. It just can't get it to the ground like the Harleys do, that's all. Maybe Yamaha should push for a **flimsy-frame** rule.

• What's it like out there, Stroker?: **Reporters** sometimes get stuck with mundane quotes from racers for their stories. Such as, "Gee, boy oh boy, everything worked just fine out there today, Chris." But sometimes it's the reporters who make **dumb statements.** We take you now to the press booth at Laguna Seca. Randy **Mamola** has just made shambles of what opposition there was. Now he's answering questions from the press. Kenny Roberts, who didn't finish, was invited to the post-race interview because, well, he's Kenny Roberts, three-time world champ. And after all, this is the only time we get to place cassette recorders in front of him all season for Q&A. A reporter from a daily newspaper pops his head through the crowd and directs a question to Roberts: "Can you still win the **championship**?" What our cub reporter failed to realize was that Roberts needed 30 points to catch leader Marco Luchinelli. For all intents and purposes, KR was out of this year's hunt, and he knew it. Mamola was a mere 16 points in arears. Roberts gave the reporter a shrug, then pointed to his compatriot and competitor as if to say, Ask him that question. The reporter restated

his question for the race winner. And here's the answer to that question. Mamola hoped he could, but things didn't look very promising, since there were only **three races** remaining, and Lucky Luchinelli had basically the same equipment as he did. As it turned out, the **Italian won** the series, with Mamola second and Roberts third. So the crown returns to Europe. But next year we'll have **three Yanks** over there: Roberts (Yamaha), Mamola (Suzuki) and Spencer (Honda).

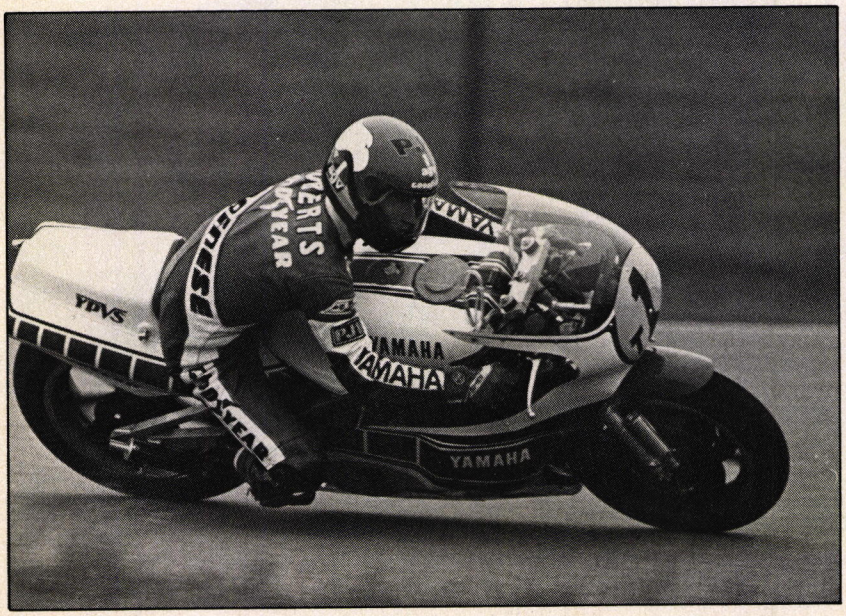
• Kawasaki is finally catching Suzuki and Yamaha on the 500cc roadrace front. If you watched the **Silverstone GP** on CBS TV last summer, you saw Kork Ballington and his Green Meanie mixing places with Yamahas and Suzukis. Ballington says he's pleased with the **Kawasaki's handling,** but states that it's still down on power. He's had a few third place finishes this season, and he's confident he'll return next year with **more horsepower.** Comparing the Suzuki and Yamaha, he adds: Yamaha has more top-end while Suzuki rules in the acceleration contest. That's the way it appears from a third-place finishing bike, anyway. But a radar gun set up by an English magazine sees it differently. Fastest at Silverstone was **Marco Luchinelli's** Suzuki at **149 mph,** followed by another Suzuki team bike carrying Randy Mamola at 148. The pair of factory Yamahas for **Kenny Roberts** and Barry Sheene registered **145** and 144 through the microwaves. Ballington's Kawasaki did 144 too, as did Freddie Spencer and his Honda NR500. •



PHOTOGRAPHY © SPORT GRAPHICS

"Lucky" Luchinelli and Kenny Roberts at speed during recent GP

Speed is relative, but in this case, it's 150 mph versus 145 mph.



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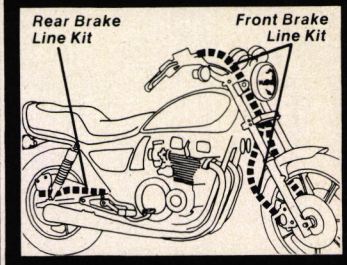

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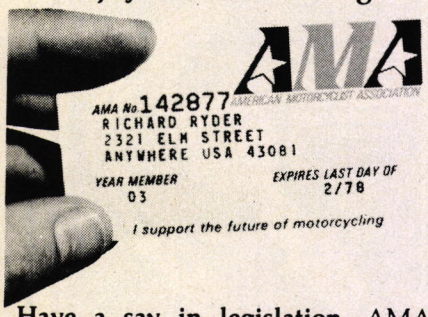

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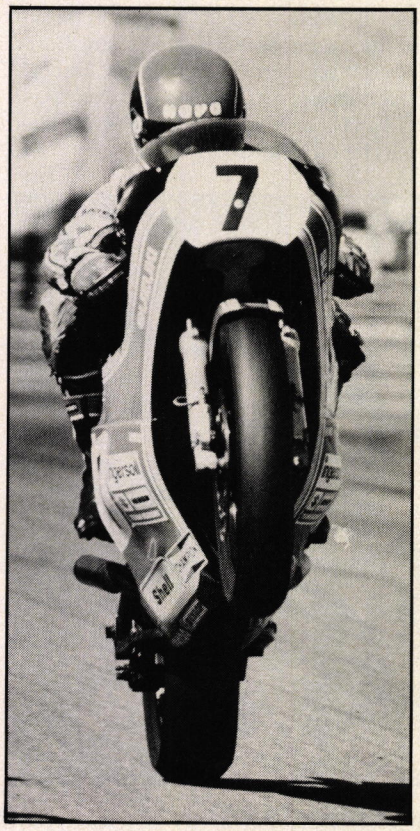
Winners & Losers:

Laguna Seca: Springboard to the Shredder

Last year's bikes have a final moment of glory.



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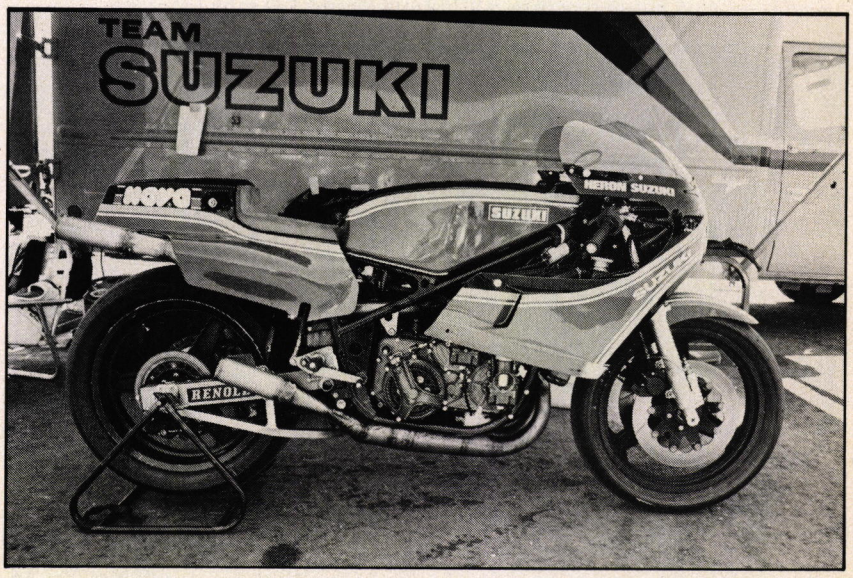
• Kenny Roberts did in 1979 what no other racer in AMA roadrace history had done before: race a 500cc GP bike in a National. Roberts won, but more important to the Turn Six Gang at the Corkscrew and the hillstanders along turns Seven and Eight at Laguna Seca, they got to see a *real* GP bike. And for American roadrace fans, that's quite a treat.

It didn't matter that it was the 1978 bike. It was Roberts' world championship machine—that's what mattered. It could have been the slowest bike on the track, yet fan interest in it would have been greater than for the entire fleet of TZ750s that followed in its wake.

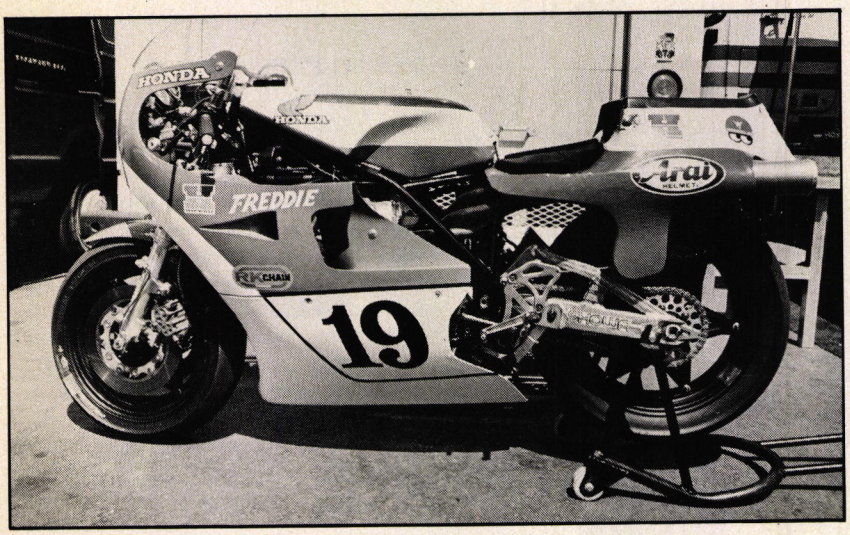
And so Laguna Seca has become a showcase for last year's 500cc GP models; Roberts returned last year with the 1979 bike to win, and came back again for the 1981 classic with the 1980 bike. This year's race winner, Randy Mamola, followed his lead, too, riding a 1980-vintage RG500. And that's precisely the way he looked at the bike—vintage: "When I saw the bike, it looked like an antique compared to this year's bike I'm racing in Europe." According to his tuner, George Vukmanovich, Suzuki pardoned the 1980 RG from the shredder (where all works racers cross their final finish lines) es-



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1981 PATRICK BEHAR

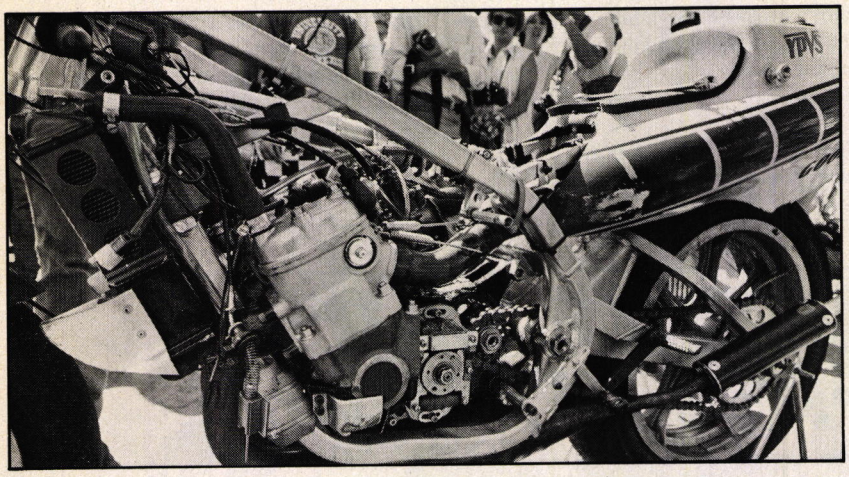
Last year's Suzuki ridden by Mamola

"It's like an antique compared to this year's bike."



Spencer inherits Honda's NR500 captainship

It sat on the pole at Laguna Seca, but was 24th on the Silverstone grid.



Roberts' vintage in-line four Yamaha

His square-four "Needs to be redesigned."

pecially for this race. Said Vukmanovich, "Randy really wanted to race here. He's American and hasn't raced over here in a long time. Suzuki did it mainly to keep him happy." The man with the golden wrenches went on, "It's last year's RG that we used to test during the winter against this year's bike at Sears Point and Willow Springs." Mamola's comment about the 80's vintage spirits hints at the development that went on.

But to the 40,000 spectators at Laguna Seca, it didn't matter that Roberts was on last year's in-line four rather than the European square-four (Kel Carruthers said there are "only two square fours." Crashing one here would only threaten their world championship bid.) or that Mamola was on "an antique." What concerned the fans was seeing *real* GP bikes. Even shredder-fodder GP bikes.

But Honda brought over the latest NR500 for Freddie Spencer to ride. Engine number NR500E-1232 was the same one he qualified 24th with at Silverstone two weeks later. Laguna Seca was more than a show for Honda. It was a time to see how much development had gone into the eight-cam, 32-valve engine. Spencer paid off with the pole position at Laguna, and climbed as high as fourth place during the Silverstone GP before dropping out with mechanical problems.

Honda's appearance with a current model GP bike at Laguna Seca may set precedent for next year's race, too. Roberts claims there is no time to do any further R&D once the regular GP season gets under way. He's also admitted that Luchinelli's and Mamola's Suzukis are superior to his Yamaha: "We need a better bike. The engine sits too high in the frame. But you can't develop a new bike on a week-to-week basis."

Perhaps Laguna Seca will prove to be next year's GP dress rehearsal for Roberts and Mamola as well as for Spencer. Then the Turn Six rowdies will have something to *really* get excited about.

—Dain Gingerelli

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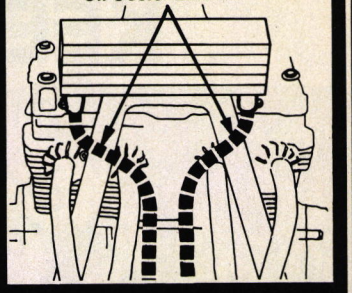

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LETTERS

Mystery Stories, Turbo tales, and One-size-fits-all.

WHAT'S MIS ING?

September's issue was great and so was the new Honda CX500 Turbo. But what's wrong on page 44 (top photo)? The CX on the left looks just fine, but the bike on the right has the word "Turbo" backwards and in *red*. What gives?

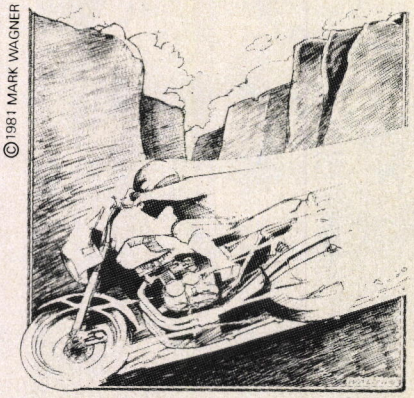
Anthony M. Compte
Elizabethtown, New York

Outrageously stylish dreambike, fantasy-come-true monument, milestone, high caliber of execution, graceful lines, elaborate most visually striking motorcycle . . . all to describe a most unique motorcycle. Is Honda also trying to introduce a new way to spell "TURBO"? (page 44, top photo, right bike)

Wayne Kosaka
San Francisco, California

You were paying attention. A prototype is still an experiment—even its logo—ed.

I've been waiting for reactions on your May cover photo, but maybe nobody discovered that the picture of the BMW R100RS and the Honda CBX is a fake? Just look at the edge that separates the



foreground from the background, especially the line along the bushes.

But I must say it was a pretty good try; I didn't discover the manipulation before the second glance at your much appreciated magazine.

Hardy Pedersen
Longview, Texas

Sky and earth photos splice to form same time, same place . —ed.

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Thank you, *C.G.*, for amplifying our cries for sport bikes. You've stood by us proclaiming to the Big Four that we are larger than their market study indicates. You've properly ridiculed specials right into their place. After reading the September *CG* I feel that the CX Turbo represents a quantum leap forward for sport bikes in the United States. Honda should be given an award for listening. As for *CG*—well, you guys get to ride 'em first.

P.S. How about a 500cc Twin two-stroke, square bore, liquid-cooled, monoshocker with triple discs and anti-dive . . . Yamaha?

Ted Waldorf
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Okay, how about it?—ed.

I've two matters to address, one important and the other frivolous, but both relate to the same thing. First, the frivolous: I see yet another tribute to what motorcycling is *not* about, the articles re the Honda CX500 Turbo. A *547*-pound, 500cc monster. Incredible. Yet another grossly overweight rocket.

Continued

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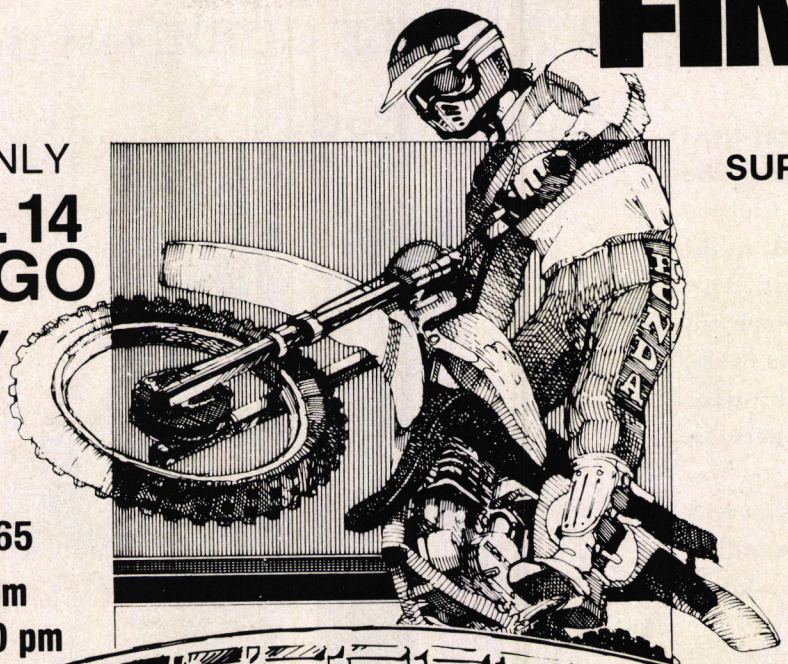

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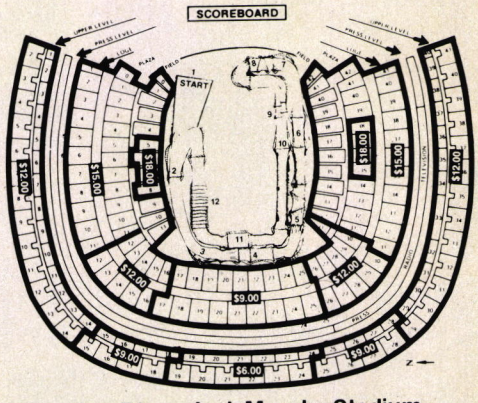

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WATCH MOTOCROSS SHOWS ON XETV 6

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CYCLE GUIDE's DIRT QUIZ NO. 13:

WHEN we at CYCLE GUIDE test an MX bike, we don't fool around in the pits. We know you won't, so we don't. We put our fastest shoes on the bike, hammering it off berms, over whoop-dee-doos and over jumps all day.

Day after day.

Then we haul the bike off to be examined and dyno-tested. We carefully check all the factory specs against what we find, making sure the bike we test isn't bogus. Then we put it all back together and hammer it some more, trying to find its limits, looking for the answer to the only question you care about:

If you buy the thing, can you win on it? Because in motocross, nothing counts but winning. You know it and we know it.

That's why at CYCLE GUIDE, the guys who do the berm-shot clicker wheelies are staffers, pro motocrossers—*and* test riders. Doing it any other way just wouldn't answer your questions.

And if we fail *your* quiz, we're out of business.

Question: Is this—

1. A pro rider doing a berm-shot clicker wheelie, or
2. A CYCLE GUIDE test rider at work?

Answer: Both.

CYCLE GUIDE

HARD RIDERS WITH THE RIGHT LINES.

LETTERS

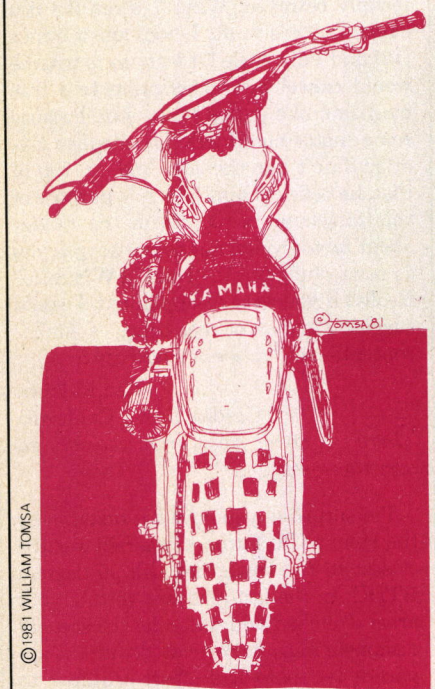
Important: I have a GS1000 with high-speed wobbles. In fact, the thing pitched me some weeks ago. I've had it gone over in detail, yet no single flaw is obvious. The windscreen adds to the problem, but is not the culprit; heavy luggage adds to low-speed instability, but not to high-speed wobbles.

What I'd like to know is, since I bought this bike after a lot of research of magazines raving about its fabulous handling, what happened? I've complained of wobbles since the day I got it, so it's not been a result of wear. Have there been other reports of this?

Also, when I was a kid, I remember seeing steering dampers on many, many bikes—something you just never see anymore. Does anyone make such a thing that I could retrofit to my bike? Also, what about the fork braces and swingarm braces being advertised now? What about motormount kits?

John T. Lloyd
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Wiggled since the day you got it or the day you hung everything on it?—ed.



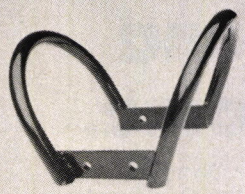
©1981 WILLIAM TOMSA

After reading your evaluation of Honda's new CX500 Turbo in the September issue, it made me think of the not-so-distant future when I'll probably look back on the present as being the "good 'ole days" and my four-cylinder DOHC, 16-valve TSCC 1981 Suzuki 750 as being simplistic.

Thomas Phoenix
Bristol, Connecticut

Continued

Racer's World



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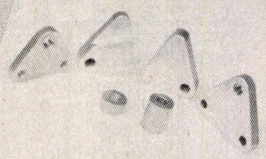

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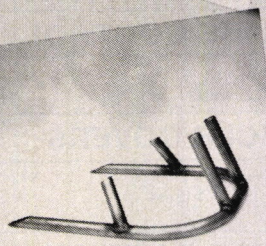

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LETTERS

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I am writing in response to a letter from Rob Armstrong in the September issue of CYCLE GUIDE. At 4pm on Tuesday I just got my new issue. Then it hit me all at once. I'm speaking, of course, of the CX500 Turbo. Then I spotted the letter from Mr. Armstrong stating that he felt terribly betrayed. Why? I mean it's not CYCLE GUIDE'S fault. I, too, am a minor (13) and I'm a little bit leery as to why he would cancel his subscription to a fine magazine like CYCLE GUIDE just because some snotty-nosed jerk like Stephen Byarlay didn't like the ads. And, on top of that, he believed him! The sole purpose of this magazine is to inform the reader about motorcycles, not to portray, as you so masterfully put it, "Nekkid Wimmin." Really! If you were disappointed, I would suggest *Playboy* or magazines of similar content—not *National Geographic.*

Ken Milhorn
Garden Grove, California

There's a bit of irony that you missed over there—ed.

I'm surprised you guys got taken in by the Honda CX Turbo. Gingerelli was the closest to the truth, but still 90 degrees BTDC. In the last analysis, getting your arms stretched and watching the scenery disappear must be correlated with the apparent technological effort required to produce the effect. The most elegant solutions are invariably the simplest.

All the motojournalists have taken potshots at the RE-5 and the FLH while applauding Kawasaki's latest efforts to lighten and simplify their streetbikes. Yet, right on the heels of the NR500 and Skywalker CBX, the Empire strikes back with the Turbo CX and you guys go into hyper-shock . . .

Continued

LETTERS

A brilliant designers' tour de force which answers once again—and possibly for all time—the question no one seemed to have asked, i.e., Who needs another 550-lb, 136-mph motorcycle that is far too complex for the average owner, let alone your neighborhood Honda dealership, to service? And the $5000+ to buy-in isn't chopped liver, either.

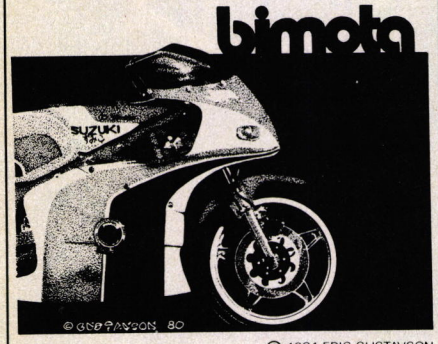
One other thing: Your spec sheet was pitiful—not exactly worthy of being engraved on a walnut-framed plaque . . . and no fuel-consumption figures. Why go to the trouble?

The only reason I bothered to write is that I read all the moto mags and think yours is the best by virtue of completeness in road tests and competition coverage, not to mention the amusing personalities your staff writers manage to portray. (Your spec sheets are worthy of being engraved if all the spaces are filled in).

Keep up the good work and print a retest of the CX once it's on the street and we'll be square.

David Handler
Sylmar, California

We're surprised you got taken in: The CX story was just that: a story. It wasn't billed as a road test. Our plans include a CX500 Turbo test in a future issue. When you promise not to worry about what other people are buying, then we'll be square—ed.



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HAVE A BAD DAY

I wanted to send along some praise. Your common sense and generally open-minded articles help keep me on the straight (and not-so-straight) and narrow. Though I'm oriented towards the "knee-dragger" syndrome, I especially enjoyed Ted West's "Heart of the Matter." We all know bikes are fun, but their greatest fun comes on those seemingly lousy days, when that feeling of liberty suddenly washes over you so pleasurably. How could you ever stay blue?

Marshall L. Millard
Atlanta, Georgia

Only if you held your breath at the same time—ed.

Continued

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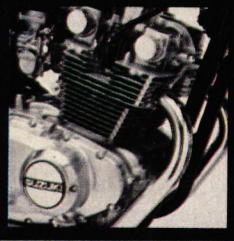
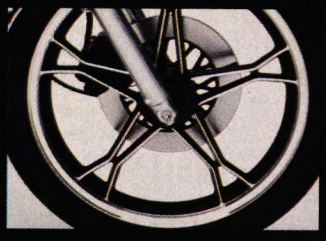
For a better view of the GS-450L, see it from the saddle. At your Suzuki dealer.

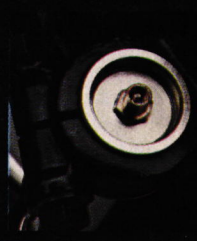
Potent DOHC engine: Delivers performance and fuel efficiency. Features gear-driven counterbalancer for extra smoothness.



Front disc brake: A standard feature, along with new-style mag-type wheels.



Front air forks: Provide better handling and ride under all conditions.



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LETTERS

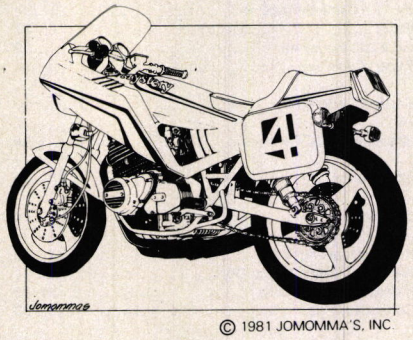
New Jersey readers will be glad to learn that motorcycle helmets for street use are now considered protective clothing (not subject to NJ sales tax) rather than sporting equipment (taxable).

Welder's helmets, goggles and face shields are exempt from sales tax, but football helmets are taxable as sporting equipment. Although motorcycling on the highway is certainly enjoyable, it is not considered a sport in the conventional or legal sense, and conventional sports have no place on the public highways. A little less emphasis on the *sport* of motorcycling, *please*.

The tax I saved on the purchase of my Simpson helmet will pay for a year's subscription to your fine magazine.

Robert D.Jones
Sea Girt, New Jersey

We'd rather dodge taxes than four-wheelers any day—ed.



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MORE DUMB

I just read Thompson At Large in the September issue. He forgot my favorite addition to the Dumb List. It's those styled mufflers that end where the axle is, making removal necessary to get the rear wheel off. Dumb.

Clay Howard
Albany, New York

Regarding your column, "The Dumb List," in September '81 CYCLE GUIDE: You may add yourself to the list. Of all the dumb things to do . . . and in print yet. You say "Nowhere" is in Wyoming. Any roadriding hog driver with a thirst can tell you that Nowhere is in Arizona. Specifically, it's about 16 miles southwest of Prescott, on Highway 89. Drop by for a good cold one sometime.

Earl Barnum
Klamath Falls, Oregon

We'll do that sometime—when we've got nowhere else to go—ed.

Address correspondence to LETTERS, CYCLE GUIDE Magazine, P.O. Box 6040, Compton, California 90224. Replies are not possible except in this column. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity. We will print as many letters and replies as space allows. •

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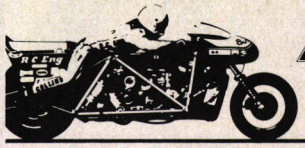

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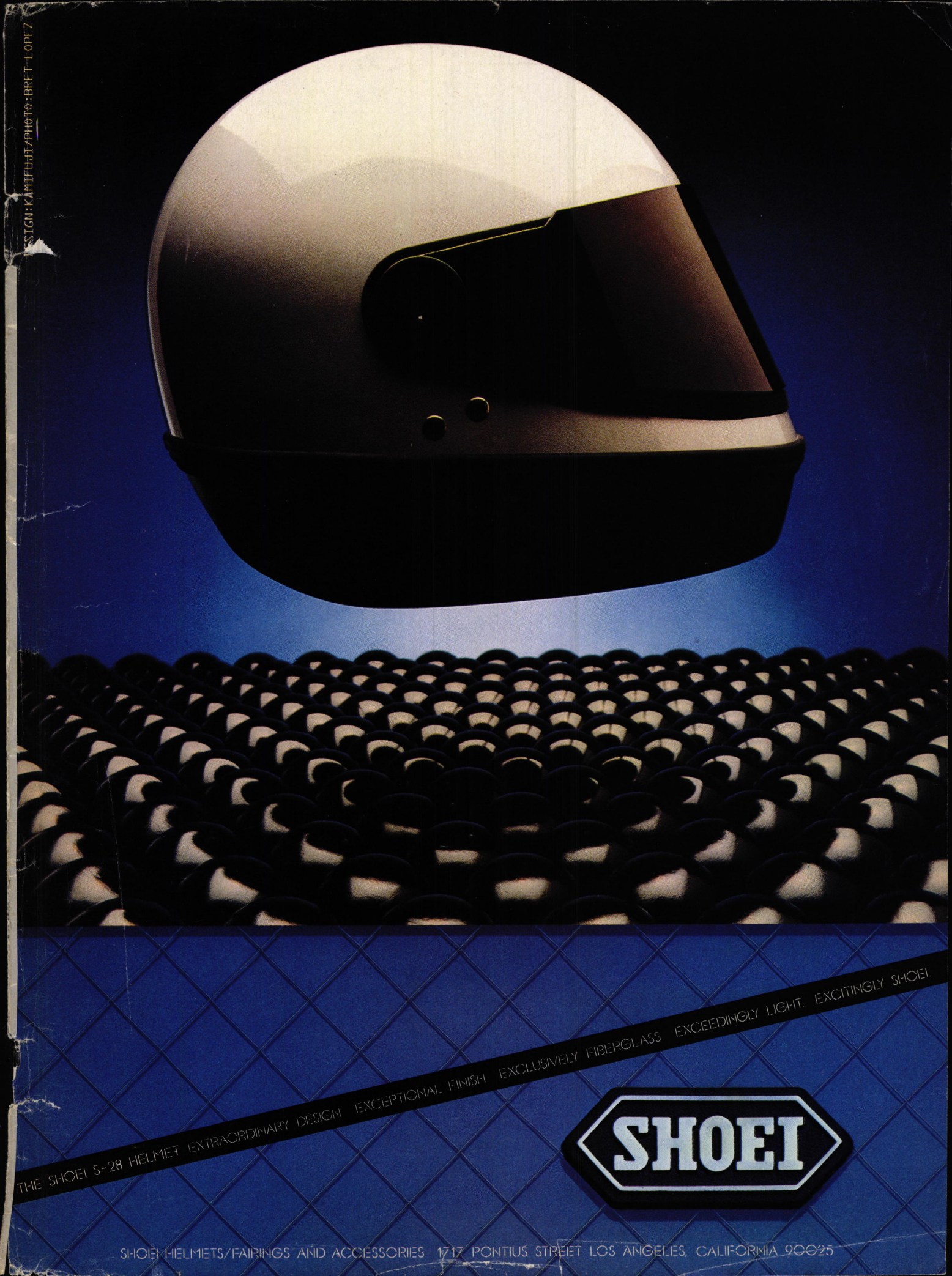
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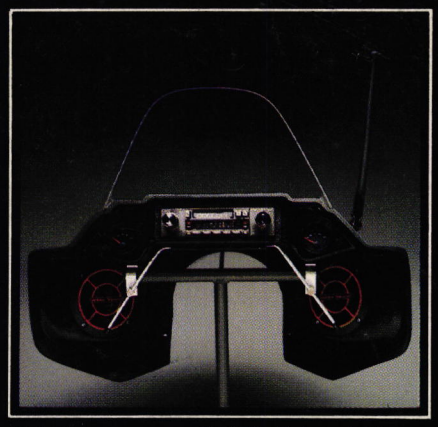

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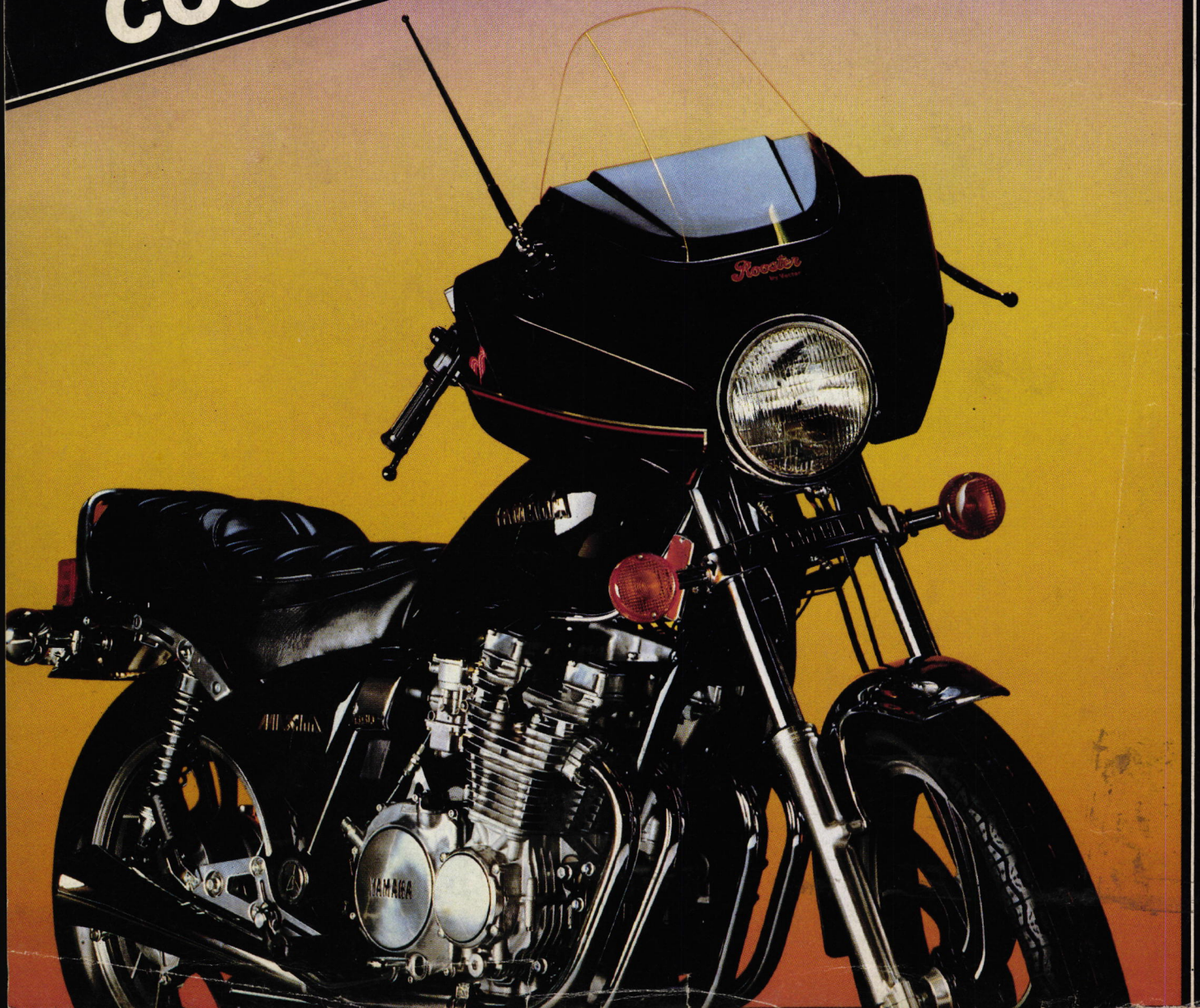
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